

**INTELLIGENT MAN'S
GUIDE TO
INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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Sir MUNMOHANDAS RAMJI Kt J P

Dedicated to the loving memory of the late
Sir Munmoliandas Ramji Kt., J. P.
as a mark of respect and veneration
for the highly valuable services
rendered by him to the cause
of Hindu religion and for the
guidance, help and inspiration
received from him by the
author from time to time

FOREWORD

BY

Mahamahopādya Dr Gangānāth Jhā, M A, D Litt; LL D
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The volume now going out to the public has been aptly named "Intelligent Man's Guide to Indian Philosophy" because as things stand at present the subject of 'Indian Philosophy,' for the matter of that, Indian 'anything' cannot be properly understood by the 'non-intelligent' man. And the irony of the situation is further accentuated when we realize that the requisite intelligence itself—by which is meant the real insight into things—cannot be attained without the right understanding of "*Indian Philosophy*" which comprises within its scope all forms and phases of a being's whole activity of body, speech and mind. And yet the highest truths of Indian Philosophy are such as cannot be understood by any one who has not gone through the entire discipline prescribed for the would-be Philosopher. Mere 'Reading' does not indeed cannot carry us very far in the domain of Philosophy and yet Reading is the first step that has to be taken. For purposes of this Reading, there are many books available, but even so, the trend of survey has not been exhausted, as will be evident to the man who has read all the available books on the perusal of the present volume. Herein the purview of 'Philosophy' has—rightly according to the Hindu idea of things—been carried far beyond that of the popularly known 'DARSANAS'. It embraces all regions of human activity. It has been written with care and judgment and it is hoped, will find readers who are sure to benefit by its study.

MITHILA

GEORGE TOWN,

ALLAHABAD,

NOVEMBER 20 1934

GANGĀNĀTH JHĀ

PREFACE

It is not without some misgivings that I venture to place before the public and all those who are interested in the growth of Philosophical and religious thought of the different schools in India, this humble work of mine, as the present day atmosphere is surcharged with dynamic and conflicting forces of all kinds seeking as it were to devour the ancient civilisation and culture of India which have survived hitherto all attacks direct or indirect made against it. The schism between the rich and poor, capital and labour and so on is too wide to be crossed over by mere school or college education without the help of a broad and all-embracing religion having as its basis a truly Philosophical and unitary interest. The present University education has entirely failed to arrest the growing tendency among students to imbibe anti-religious feelings leading to agnosticism and even to atheism or to secure a brotherly spirit of unity and a loving co-operation between members of the same society belonging to different castes, creeds, and religions.

The Darwinian principles of "Marry and Multiply" and "Survival of the fittest" have done considerable harm to society. No religious instructions are imparted at present to students in schools and colleges and sometimes even a policy of utter selfishness and aloofness is encouraged. The present education, apart from its other defects, is not training the students for a life of high discipline which is so necessary to combat successfully the struggles of actual life. It is rather unfortunate that owing to the absence of religious education in our schools and colleges and due to the influence of modern thought and culture on the minds of our youths at present, there is no yearning for knowledge of Hindu Scriptures and Shāstras and the principles of religion and Philosophy taught therein as would appear from the remarks of Professor Maxmüller who says "It is feared that even this small remnant of Philosophical learning will vanish in one or two generations as the youths of the present day, even if belonging to orthodox Brahmin families do not take to these studies as there is no encouragement." A glowing tribute is also paid to the ancient religions of India by the famous Dr 'Robert Earnest Hume, Professor of History of Religions, New

York, as would appear from the following remarks made by him in the Preface to his translation of the Upanishads. Thus he says "I would add a reverent salutation to India—my native land, mother of more religions than have originated or flourished in any other country of the world."

It is really deplorable that there is seen of late a growing tendency to indifference towards religion on the part of students which develops into antipathy and sometimes even into animosity towards religion. To combat this evil therefore, I have made an humble attempt to explain in this book the first principles of Philosophy and traditional religion, which have been inherited by the sons of India as their most cherished and valued heritage, but which are at present being neglected by them. The object of this book, however, is not so much to restate the mere tenets of each system of philosophical and religious thought put forward by the reputed authors of the several philosophical and religious works in India as to give a more comprehensive account of the philosophical and religious activities of the Indian nation from the earliest times and show that religion is connected with the social and national structure of the Hindu Society. The Hindu religion known as Sanātan or Eternal Religion of hoary antiquity with its socio-religious order of castes and other institutions, which was founded on the Philosophical doctrine of Monism as propounded in the Upanishads, does not profess to be a sectarian or communal religion consisting of certain dogmas, rites, and forms laid down for the guidance of the followers of certain castes, creeds and sects only, but it is a social institution having eternal principles, truths, beliefs, laws and practices, which aimed at bringing about the unity and solidarity of the nation as a whole and further securing in the end true happiness and independence of all human beings as members of a living organism under the kingdom of God.

Certain schools of modern thought have, of late, offered a real challenge to religious beliefs, and they have put forward different interpretations of their own to counteract the religious beliefs of the people. One such school has propounded the theory of materialism and naturalistic atheism. The followers of this school have propounded

the view that belief in the existence of God was unnecessary to explain the origin of this world, which according to them, was the mechanical expression of unpurposive and unthinking forces of nature, which had no regard to the hopes and fears of the faltering man, and a note was taken by them of those things only which subserved to the material comforts and wants of human beings. Mr Bertrand Russell is the pioneer of the above school of thought. According to him, human values were not fundamental, and the world of nature and man had been created by accident only. In short, a human individual only as endowed with intelligence, and not God sat in judgment over our actions and who had a final say in all matters. This was however only a dogmatic mode of negative thinking which could not satisfy the rational Philosopher. It may be asked if there was no purpose plan or design in this world of nature and man, how is that every human being has an innate desire of securing eternal existence supreme happiness unalloyed with any particle of suffering and true freedom? This would clearly prove the theory of naturalistic atheism as irrational and one is led to postulate the existence of an eternal intelligent Being called God which ever exists and which has got eternal freedom as its innate nature. From the every earliest times Indian mind has been averse to atheism, and all sacred and religious works of the Hindus, including the Dharma Śāstras (traditional laws) with the ethics therein, were theistic, which assumed a belief in God as the supreme moral being, who was the creator, ruler and governor of this universe of nature and man. The natural and moral laws of God were just and inflexible and one could secure real happiness by an unswerving Faith in Him, and by a disinterested service coupled with true love to Him, who alone was capable of emancipating the faltering humanity from all suffering by His Divine Grace. In India, the doctrine of devotion to God (*Bhakti*) is so popular that numerous religious cults and creeds have been started by several prophets, saints, and savants, from time to time which have attracted a large number of followers till to-day. For the same reason, the Bhagwad Gītā or the Holy Song sung by the Divine Incarnation, Lord Shri Kṛṣṇa, which contains the quintessence of the Vedas and Upanishads and constitutes one of the Prasthānas or canonical books of highest

authority to the Hindus has captivated the minds of persons of all castes and creeds in India who love it as their most precious treasure-trove.

There is seen of late, all around, a growing tendency to disintegrate, and a movement in that behalf is launched forth by certain reformers propounding various false theories as those of equality of rights of all, socialism, communism, Bolshevism and so on, apparently with the object of emancipating the masses from all disabilities whether economic, political, social, educational, or otherwise, but really to serve their own ends, either political or otherwise, by destroying the Faith and beliefs of the people. People are therefore required to be on their strict guard to protect themselves from the contaminating influence of these evil forces, which have spread everywhere, and which threaten to destroy their peace, happiness and liberty. I have therefore explained in this book the fallacies underlying the modern theory of communism and pointed out ways and means of combating the present day disruptive forces leading to communism, Bolshevism, and so on, and urged the need of leading more a truly religious life and a life of strict discipline and self-restraint as taught in the Hindu Shāstras than a life of rank materialism and animalism which lead a man to degradation and suffering only in the long run. Of late, however, we find in some of the eminent scientists of the West a growing tendency towards spiritualism and and they are showing signs of dissatisfaction towards materialism. Hence, with a view to avert the present day disruptive forces which threaten to eat away the very vitals of our Society, I have made an humble attempt in this book to create in the minds of the present day youths, who are fascinated with ideas of modern culture, education and civilization, a real taste for the superior culture and civilization possessed by the Hindus who were once the torch bearers of light and learning. These pages are therefore intended to present to the reader in a handy-form the cardinal doctrines relating to the philosophical, religious, and traditional systems of thought as prevailing in India, and give him a general idea of the Hindu Philosophy and traditional religion and their extreme usefulness in daily life, so as to enable him to withstand successfully the antagonistic and divergent forces which have penetrated deep into our country and created dissensions in the Hindu Community and retarded its growth and development as a nation,

This work deals with the principles of Philosophy, Religion and Ethics as taught in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagwad Gita, the two Epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata and the Hindu Shāstras in a general way. While in the subsequent books which will be issued in due course the principles of Philosophy and religion as taught in the several systems or Darshanas proper, both theistic as well as atheistic and the several schools, sects, creeds, and cults of religious thought as started by different teachers from time to time and having numerous followers in almost all parts of our country, will be explained by me. Special care has been taken in these pages to avoid a sectarian point of view while dealing with questions affecting the traditional religion of the Hindus and a very broad and comprehensive standpoint is taken throughout. The exact relationship subsisting between law and religion in all bearings has also been explained in this book so as to make it useful to any one in the daily walks of life.

Besides, to make the book useful to the legal profession, special attention has been paid to subjects having a direct bearing on law such as the sources of law, marriage, divorce, Mīmāṃsā rules of interpretation of Texts, ancient customs and usages, catholicity of the sacred laws, theories of punishment, philosophy of law and so on.

In conclusion I have got to acknowledge my indebtedness to the learned authors of the several books specially referred to in this book and particularly, to Dr Paul Duussen and Mr W Douglas P Hill & the authors of the "The Philosophy of the Upanishads" and "The Bhagwad Gita" Oxford University Press, respectively, for the valuable assistance derived by me from their excellent works.

I also desire to acknowledge here my grateful thanks to my friend Mr F B Vaccha Bar-at-law for helping me in correcting the proofs relating to the vedic period and also to my worthy father Rao Bahadur C S Pandya B A for helping me in correcting the proofs of the remaining portions of the book. I have also to thank my friend Mr R Krishnamacharya, the Editor of the "Indian Mirror" for the help rendered by him in furnishing me with certain information relating to communism dealt with in the book. Lastly I have to acknowledge a deep debt of gratitude to the various Religious Heads and Pandits for making valuable suggestions on many topics dealing with the Shāstric authorities.

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MANUBHAL C PANDYA.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Introduction	1-16 (24)
Object of Philosophy	1
Subjects of Philosophy	2
Relation of Philosophy and Religion	2
The Law of Karma and Transmigration of the Souls	3
The Doctrine of Evil and Freedom of Choice	5
Means of knowledge	7
Historic survey	10
The gist of the teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads	12
The paths of Devotion and knowledge	13
Reconciliation of Monotheism with monism	14
Hindu religion and its comprehensiveness	16- 1
Trend of Modern Science more towards spiritualism	16- 4
Contrast of Eastern and Western standpoints of religion	16- 6
Contrast between Eastern and Western systems of morality	16- 8
The sacred Laws and Traditions of the Āryans	16- 9
The Institution of caste (Chāturvarṇa)	16-12
Hindu Ethics	16-19
Catholicity of the Hindu Dharma Shāstras and adaptation of Law to changed circumstances	16-22

BOOK No. I
VEDIC PERIOD
CHAPTER II

Samhitās and Brāhmanas

Introductory °	19- 24
General	19
The age of the Vedas	20
The field of Vedic Subjects.	20
Vedic Karmas or actions	25- 29
Sacrifice as Dharma or Religious Duty	25
Rules relating to the social order of castes and ... stages of life (Vaināsrāma)	26
Rules of good conduct and Ethics	28
Kāmya Yajnas or Sacrifices with desire	28
Theology of the Vedic deities	29- 38
Major Deities... ..	29
Minor Deities.	34
Āryan Deities and the Deities of Dāsas and Asuras. ...	35
Abstract Deities	37
Vedic Philosophy	38- 47
Classification of the Vedic Gods	38
One God having three forms (Trimūrti). ...	39
Polytheism and Pantheism . . .	39
Henotheism	41
Monotheism	41
Philosophical inquiries after discovery of the Supreme Being	42
Cosmogenic hymns	43
Philosophical conception of the Supreme Being in Purusha Sūkta	46

Vedic Eschatology	48- 51
Reward of Heaven after death for good works	48
Celestial punishment of the doers of Evil-deeds (Pitṛa)	
In connection with Gods	49
Law of Karma in connection with doers of evil-deeds	49
Itinerary of the doers of Evil-deeds (Pitṛa) for	
Heaven (Svarga)	49
Connection to the celestial region of heaven	50
Origin of the law of Karma or retribution	51
Interpretation of the Vedas	51- 53
Different schools of interpretation	51
History and evolution of interpretation	52
Trends of a school of interpretation	52
Critical method of interpretation	53

CHAPTER III

Philosophy of the Upanishads

Introductory	54- 58
Classification of the Upanishads	56
Principal Topics of the Upanishads	58
Ontology	58- 68
Nature of Nirguna (attributeless) Brahman	
or the Absolute	59
The nature of Ātman or self	62
The Doctrine of Advaita or non-dual monism	64
Absolute Idealism and unity of the world	65
Theology	68- 79
Search for God of worship	69
Upanishads or Meditations-Symbol Worship	71
Meditations of God with Attributes	72
Worship of Ātman or self	74
Theism	75

Cosmology	79- 91
Creation of the Universe... ..	79
Idealism, Pantheism and Causation	80
Theories of Triple and Quintuple Creation ...	81
Destruction of the Universe	82
The Doctrine of Māyā or Unreality of the Universe.	83
Criticism of the theories of Creation	88
Esoteric Doctrine of Cosmology... .	90
Psychology	91- 96
Individual Soul	91
True and false self	92
Gross, subte, and causal bodies	92
The theory of five sheaths of self	94
Waking, dreaming and deep sleep	95
Triune Unity of the Supreme Self	95
Eschatology	96-101
Immortality of the Soul. . . .	96
Transmigration of the Soul	98
The Doctrine of five Fires Panchāgni Vidyā ..	99
Devayāna and Pitriyāna or the Paths of Gods and Fathers	99
The Doctrine of transmigration based on the law of Karma and retribution . . .	100
Emancipation	101-105
Oneness with the Supreme Being	101
Companionship with the Supreme Being .	104
Release by stages (Krama-Mukti)	105
Ethics of the Upanishads	105-108
Moral Virtues	105
Rules of castes and stages of life (Varnāshrama).	106
Place of Ethics in the Upanishadic philosophy ,	107

BOOK No II

THE EPIC PERIOD

CHAPTER IV

The Epic Philosophy

Introductory	III
The Rāmāyana	112-113
The Ethics of the Rāmāyana	112
Theology of the Rāmāyana	113
The Māhābhārata	113-124
Theology of the Mahābhārata	113
The Pancharatra or Bhagwat system	120
Systems of Philosophy in the Mahābhārata —	
Philosophical epics in the Mahābhārata	121
Five orthodox systems of philosophy	121
Unorthodox and atheistical systems	122
Theistical Sankhya	123
Classical Sankhya	123
Precursors of Buddhist and Jain Religions	123
Darshan and Monism	124
Ethics of the Māhābhārata	124-125

CHAPTER V

The Bhagwad-Gītā

Introductory	126-128
Ontology	129-135
Discrimination of Ātman (Self) and Prakṛiti (not-self or nature)	129
Ātman or true self is not a Doer	130
Unity of Brahman Transcendent and Immanent.	131
The Doctrine of Knowledge and its usefulness.	133
The Theory of Union (Samucchaya) of action and knowledge	134

Theology	135-149
Early History of Theism	135
Incarnation of Krishna-Vāsudeva — . . .	137
Whether the embodied form of the incarnate Krishna is the Supreme Brahman or a part manifestation of his glories (Vibhūti)	138
The embodied form of Krishna is illusory (i.e. of Māyā)	139
Organic Unity of the cosmos in the being of Krishna transcendent and immanent. .	139
Krishna as concrete manifestation of the all- pervading and infinite Brahman for worship	140
The Doctrine of Bhakti or Devotion —	
The path of Devotion in the Gītā is universal and non-sectarian	140
Moral effect of devotion	141
Simple worship with love preferred to the formal one...	142
Identity of Krishna-Vāsudeva with the Supreme Being as the Royal mystery . . .	142
Organic unity of the cosmos in Krishna's lower and higher natures	143
Devotee with knowledge object of Krishna's love	144
Emancipation as the fruit of devotion . . .	144
Two methods of worship devotion to the manifest Lord and contemplation of the unmanifest Absolute	144
Unity of Krishna in various aspects —	
Krishna as Purushottama or Triple Purusha	145
Krishna as Īshwara or ruler	147
Krishna as God of Justice and fruit-giver.	147
The Doctrine of Divine Grace	148

Cosmology	149-158
Creation by the Lord of Dual Nature	149
Order of Evolution	151
The Doctrine of three Gunas (strands) of Nature	152
The Doctrine of Non-Dual Monism or Absolute Idealism	154
Absolute Idealism and Pantheism	154
The Doctrine of Māyā or Unreality of the World	155
Prakṛiti is the Creative medium of God	156
Prakṛiti constitutes the Law of Causation	157
Psychology	158-160
Nature of Empiric Soul	158
Empiric Soul as door and enjoyer	159
Release by knowledge of field (Kṣhetra) and the field-knower (Kṣhetrajña)	159
Free and bound Souls	160
Eschatology	160-162
Paths of Fathers (Pitṛyāna) and the Gods (Devayāna)	160
Atmospheric and Nether worlds (Hell)	161
The Doctrine of Transmigration	161
Emancipation	162-166
Positive conception of Emancipation	162
Different forms of Emancipation —	163
Oneness with the Supreme Being	163
Emancipation as an Eternal and Immutable Abode	163
Approach to the Highest Divinity for eternal comradeship	164
Means to Emancipation	165
Ethics of the Gītā	166-178
Relation of action and knowledge	166
Denouncement of total inaction	167
Denouncement of actions with Desire	167
Doctrine of Karma-Yoga or action without desire	168

Practice of self control and work with Detachment	168
The cause of Sin	171
Sacrificial Acts	172
Duties relating to the four castes (Chātuvārṇa).	173
Moral qualities	175
Self-realisation as the supreme purpose of Ethics in the Gita	178

CHAPTER VI

Dharma Shāstras

Early History	179-180
Dharma Sūtras	180-182
Sūtra Literature attached to the Vedas	180
Classification of Dharma Sūtras . . .	181
Ethics of the Dharma Sūtras ...	181
Dharma Shāstras	183-187
Basis of authority of the Smritis	183
Subject-matter of Smritis	183
Classification of Smritis .. .	184
Principal Smritis	184
Commentaries on Smritis	186
Compilations and Digests of Law	186
Mīmāṃsā rules of interpretation ..	187
Manu Smṛiti	187-200
Glowing tributes of Scholars to Manu Smṛiti...	187
Short summary of Manu Smṛiti	188
Important Doctrines in Manu Smṛiti ..	189
Sources of authority —	189
Typology	189
Cosmology	190
Polemology	191
The Law of Karma and Transmigration of the Soul	191
Ethics (Dharma)	192

Duties of the four castes (Chāturvarṇa)	198
Obligatory duties of the twice-born to perform the daily Prayers (Sandhyā) and the five great sacrifices (Pancha Mahayajna)	195
Hospitality to the guest and social service	197
Prohibition of inter-caste marriage	198
Preference of a moral life to that by birth.	198
The high status of womanhood	199
Sacramental character and indissolubility of Hindu marriage	199
Ideal Unity of Husband and wife	199
Freedom of a woman in conformity with law (Dharma)	200
Brāhman as the type of virtue and self-sacrifice	200
Incidents of Hindu marriage and marriage rites and ceremonies	200-213
Marriage a religious sacrament and obligation	200
Betrothal and marriage	201
Competency of parties to marriage	202
Suitable qualifications of a Bridegroom	202
Whether eunuchs and madmen are competent to marry?	203
Suitable qualifications of a bride for marriage	203
Marriage with girls outside one's caste	204
Eight forms of marriage	205
Different sorts of sons	207
Rites and ceremonies of Brāhma marriage	208
The Hindu ideal of marriage	212
Rules and Regulations governing marriage and marital relations	213-248
Selection and choice of husband	213
Age of marriage	214
Period of marital consummation and regulations relating thereto	220

Rights and Duties of Husband and wife ...	224
The custom of Satī or self-immolation of widow... ..	229
Maintenance of wife and widow — ..	230
Duty of husband to maintain his wife § ..	230
Widow's right to maintenance ...	231
Forfeiture of maintenance by widow's unchastity	231
Adoption by husband and wife... ..	232
Adoption by husband	232
„ „ wife	233
„ „ widow	233
Niyoga or the practice of begetting a son on the wife of another by a religious appointment or commission	235
Widow remarriage whether recognised in the Dharma Shāstras and if so how far ? ..	237
Divorce repugnant to the Sacramental theory of marriage	244
Polygamy inconsistent with the Vedic ideal of marriage	245
Polyandry uncommon among the Āryan Hindus	246
Sale of a girl denounced by the lawgivers ...	248
The Sacred laws and traditions of the Āryans	248-262
Twofold nature of the Āryan religion as taught in the Dharma Shāstras	248
Traditional mode (Paramparā) of handing down sacred Precepts and customs about good conduct (Sadāchāra)... ..	250
Sources of the sacred laws of the Āryans ...	252
Rules of interpretation of the Sacred Texts...	253
Good conduct (Āchāra) and ancient usages as transcendent law	254
Assembly of Learned Brāhmins (Paṇṣhad) competent to decide doubtful points of sacred law	258
Different sets of duties for different ages ...	259
Catholicity of Dharma Shāstras and adaptation of law to changing conditions	260

Rules of conduct for the four orders of caste as constituting the Sanātan Religion (<i>Chātur Varna Dharma</i>)	262-287
What is Sanātan Religion	262
The religious sacraments (<i>Saṅkalāras</i>)	262
Institution of four castes (<i>Chatur Varna</i>)	264
Āryans (<i>Savarnas</i>) and Un-Āryans (<i>Avarnas</i>)	266
Origin of caste in Pre-Vedic times and its subsequent growth	268
Dīśas and Sudras	270
Distinction of caste on the basis of <i>Varna</i> (colour) and <i>Jāti</i> (small groups of caste)	271
Determination of caste by birth and not profession	273
Offsprings of mixed marriages (<i>Varna Saṅkara</i>) (<i>Anuloma</i> and <i>Pratiloma</i>)	275
Duties and occupations of <i>Chandālas</i> and <i>śvapachas</i> (degraded classes of persons)	277
Whether there could be a change of castes in this very life or in succeeding lives only ?	278
Whether a <i>Sudra</i> is entitled to study the Vedas and perform Vedic sacrifices ?	280
Religious duties and professions of the four castes (<i>Chatur-Varna Dharma</i>)	282
General rules of religious conduct for the twice-born and their relaxation in the <i>Kali</i> age and in distressed times	284
Excommunication from caste for infraction of caste rules	284
Conclusion	287
Rules of conduct laid down for the four orders of life (<i>Āshrama Dharma</i>)	287-314
Duties of a Student (<i>Brahmachārī</i>)	287
The Duties of a householder (<i>Grihastha</i>)	296

Duties of a Hermit (<i>Vānaprastha</i>)	...	...	304
„ „ an ascetic (<i>Sanyāsi</i>)	...	...	306
General observations on the four orders of life			311
Rules and Regulations about food and drink			314-326
Rules based on express texts, old traditions and principles of hygiene	...	...	314
Lawful and forbidden food and drink		...	315
Rules for and against flesh-eating	...	..	317
Lawful and forbidden flesh	...	..	318
Origin of the practice of flesh-eating and subsequent restrictions	...	...	318
General public feeling against cow-slaughter from the earliest times	..	..	319
Determination of the legal position as regards flesh-eating	..	...	321
Relaxation of the rules and restrictions as to diet in the Kali age	...	...	323
Relaxation of restrictions as to diet in distressed times.	...	...	324
Rules and Regulations regarding purity and defilement by touch etc.,	...	...	326-339
Regulations regarding purity of conduct (<i>Shauchāchāra</i>) an integral part of the Hindu religion			326
Regulations about compulsory bath and sipping of water (<i>Āchaman</i>) for purification			328
Regulations regarding purification from defilement by touch	..	...	330
Regulations interdicting touch during impurity due to birth and death	..	..	332
Impurity due to suicide and rules of purification	..	...	332
Interdiction of the touch of a woman in menses or in confinement	..	...	333
Rules regarding pure and impure things and modes of purification from defilement		...	334
Defilement of food by touch and even sight of the impure	...	..	337

Relaxation of the rules about purity etc in times of distress	389
Special rules of interdiction regarding touch and intercourse with Chāndālas, degraded persons (Patitas) and low castes (Antyajas)	339-371
Defilement by touch or intercourse with Chāndālas and degraded castes (Patitas)	389
Special rules of purification from defilement and pollution by touch of <i>Chāndālas</i> etc	341
Whether the rule of Untouchability was a modern innovation or whether it had the sanction of the Vedas ?	344
Whether the Hindu Shastras or the law of the land warrant the Untouchables alleged right to temple entry	350
Untouchables in the Buddhist Literature	354
Bewildering Extent of Prevalence of Untouchability in Southern India due more to Pre-Dravidian influence	355
The Anti-Untouchability movement	357
Fundamental difference between backward classes and Untouchables	358
Low and backward castes (<i>Intiyajas</i>)	359
Bogey of untouchability as a political instrument	361
Uplift of backward classes and Sudras	362
Elevation of Sudras and degraded persons to Āryanhood by <i>Vratyastoma</i> Ceremony and the Sudhi (purification) movement	364
Chāndālas (Untouchables) Antyajas (low castes) and Sudras (servant class) and their inter-relationships	366
Two classes of Sudras, Sat-Sūdras and Asat-Sudras	366
Exploitation of Sudras and low caste men by the reformers	368
Elevation of status of Sat-Sudras and persons of low castes of pure habits and special rights accorded to some of them by way of exception	368
Growing spirit of communalism harmful to the growth of true nationalism and unity	370

Punishments and penalties for religious offences and Sins	371-389
Sin due to a transgression of the Divine laws	371
Theories of punishment.— ...	373
Retributive theory ...	373
Deterrent or preventive theory ..	374
Reformative or educative theory ...	374
Primitive punishments...	375
Punishment of fines ...	376
Corporal punishments ...	377
Penances for sins and religious offences by way of purification ...	377
Confession and a determination not to commit sin in future, essential elements ...	379
Classes of difficult penances ...	381
Classification of Sins as Mahāpātakas (great sins), Upapātaks and other minor sins ...	384
Excommunication of persons having intercourse with out-casts ...	387
Expiatory penances and rites dictated by the synod of learned Brāhmans (Vidvat Parishad)	388
The special purpose of the Dharma Shāstras	389-401
Ethics the main purpose of the Dharma Shāstras	389
Rules of the Dharma Shāstras were means only to the supreme end of self-realisation and not ends in themselves ...	390
Whether the ethics of the Bhagvad Gītā is opposed to that of the Dharma Shāstras ?...	391
Obedience to law and authority paramount duty of all as laid down in the Scriptures and Dharma Shāstras ...	392
Theistic basis of the ethics and sacred laws laid down in the Dharma Shāstras ...	393
Criticism of the modern theory of equality of all	394
Restraining influence of the Dharma Shāstras in combating the present day disruptive forces leading to communism and Bolshevism. ...	397
The fallacies underlying the modern theory of communism ...	397
Some phases of communism ...	397
Communism opposed to democracy and its disastrous consequences ...	398
Restraining influence of the Dharma Shāstrās	399

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. B	Aitareya Brahmana
A. D S	Āpastambha Dharma Sutras
A G S	Āpastambha Gr̥hya Sutras
A. P	Āditya Purāna
A. R	Ayodhyakānd Rāmāyana
A. S	Āpastambha Smṛti
A. U	Aitareya Upanishad
A. V	Atharva Veda
A. V S	Atharva Veda Samhitā
Ag S	Angiras Smṛti
At. S	Atri Smṛti
B D S	Bauddhāyana Dharma Sūtra.
B G	Bhagwad Gītā
B. P or Bh P	Bhāgwat Purāna
B S	Bṛhaspati Smṛti
B. U	Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad.
Bom	Indian Law Reports Bombay
Bom L. R	Bombay Law Reporter
Brookes G L	Brookes Gospel of Life
Ch U	Chhāndogya Upanishad
G D S or G S	Gotama Dharma Sutras.
G G S	Gobhila Gr̥hya Sūtras.
H. W R. Act.	Hindu Widows Remarriage Act.
I. A.	Indian Appeals.
I. U	Ishavāsyā Upanishad.
J S	Jaiminiya Purva Mimamsa Sutras.
K. U	Katha Upanishad
Ka. U	Kaustaki Upanishad.
Ke U	Kena Upanishad
M B. Anu or M B A P	Māhābharata Anushāsana Parva.
M B S P	Māhābharata Shanti Parva.
M I. A	Moore's Indian Appeals.
M. S	Manu Smṛti.
M U	Mundaka Upanishad

M. U Bh	...	..	Mundaka Upanishad Bhāshya by Shankarāchārya.
Ma U	..	.	Māndukya Upanishad.
N Pt U .	...	...	Nṛsiṃha Pūrva Tapini Upanishad.
N S	...	.	Nāiada Smṛiti
P. B.	.	...	Panchavimsa Brāhmana.
P. C	..	...	Privy Council.
P G. S.	...		Pāṇskara Gṛhya Sūtra
P. S	...	..	Pāiāśara Smṛiti
P. U	...	.	Prasna Upanishad.
R. Pt U .	...	.	Rāma Pūrva Tapini Upanishad.
R. V	.	.	Rig Veda.
S. B	.	.	Satapatha Brāhmana
S. B. E ...		.	Sacred Books of the East Series.
S. G S. or Sh. G. S.			Shāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra
S. U	..		Svetāsvatara Upanishad.
Sm. S. or Sv S	.		Samvarta Smṛiti
T. B	..	...	Taittiriya Brāhmana
T S.	..	..	Taittiriya Samhitā
T. U	.	.	Taittiriya Upanishad.
V D S. or V S			Vasistha Dharmā Sūtra.
V K. S .		.	Vātsyāyana Kāma Sūtra
V P	...	...	Vāyu Purāna
V S	..		Vājasanīya Samhitā.
Vi. S	.	..	Vishnu Smṛiti
Vy S.		Vyāsa Smṛiti
Y S.	Yājñavalkya Smṛiti.
Ym. S.	Yama Smṛiti.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

(1) Object of Philosophy

Though the scope of Indian Philosophy in its treatment and discussion of the various topics and subjects generally is similar to that of Western Philosophy, one at once marks out the singular absence of all discussion relating to the summum bonum of human life called Moksha or final Beatitude in Western Philosophy as distinguished from Indian philosophy, according to which, Moksha constitutes the final goal and end of all life. All schools of Indian Philosophy whether orthodox or heterodox, theistic or atheistic, realistic or idealistic, lay special stress on Moksha in their various treatises as the highest object of philosophy though there is a great difference among them as to their views about the exact nature of Moksha. Some of them take a negative view of Moksha as meaning freedom from all pain and misery as the Naiyayikas, Vaisheshikas, Sankhyas and Buddhists, while others take a positive view of Moksha as meaning the highest supersensuous bliss or happiness as in the case of Vedantins.

The Mimamsakas believe in Svarga or enjoyment of the heaven as Moksha which is the highest reward for the performance of sacrifices as enjoined by the Vedas. The general word for philosophy in the East is Darshan which literally means perception or direct vision according to Vedanta. Perception here does not mean ordinary perception or cognition by the senses but it means the inner consciousness and joyful experience of the real as a harmonious whole, transcending all distinctions of subject and object but with a balance of thought, feeling and willing which is acquired by Intuition. This is opposed to the purely rationalistic view of cognition or knowledge which is based on previous conceptions and according to which the object is always opposed to the subject as setting up a limit to all knowledge. To tide over the gulf between the subject and

the object, spirit and nature or soul and body, various theories have been advanced by Western philosophers from time to time such as the mechanical theory, occasionalism, and the theory of pre-established harmony, but none of these theories gives a satisfactory solution of the difficulty of bridging over the gulf between subject and object as opposed to each other. Of late, however, we find a tendency in some of the Western philosophers of recognising Intuition as the highest means of acquiring true knowledge of the Absolute or the Reality in all its bearings thus supporting the conception of the true end of philosophy as entertained by the Indian Philosophers as stated above

(2) Subjects of Philosophy.

The main subjects of philosophy are Ontology which deals with and explains the true nature and essence of Being and Reality, Cosmology, which deals with physical nature and the theories of creation and Rational Psychology which deals with the nature of spirit or life and the psychical states of individuals in their relations to the environments. It also includes the science of Epistemology which explains the theory of knowledge and how knowledge of things is acquired. The various schools of Indian philosophy deal with the above subjects and they have got different theories of their own by which they try to establish Ultimate truth. Several of these schools further deal with the subject of Eschatology which explains the doctrine of the last or final state of persons, viz death and what happens after death. Several philosophers of the West have however refused to include Eschatology as a subject of metaphysics proper and they have relegated it to the domain of religion which is separated from philosophy proper.

(3) Relation of Philosophy and Religion.

In India philosophy and religion are inseparable unlike the West where religion and philosophy are not only divorced but they are actually antagonistic to each other. As a matter of fact, the aim of both religion and philosophy is one, namely the determination of absolute truth or reality and the Ultimate end of life. In India constant attempts have been made from the very earliest times to reconcile philosophy with religion and religion is put on a sound basis from a

philosophical stand-point so as to satisfy the rational test. It may be stated generally that religion establishes all truth with authority while philosophy does so by appeal to reason. Religion is generally dogmatic while philosophy is rational. The truths are enjoined upon us by religion in a dogmatic manner while philosophy presents the same to us in a persuasive manner so as to induce us to accept the same by an appeal to our reason.

(4) The Law of Karma and Transmigration of the Souls

Besides religion, Indian philosophy also treats of morality as forming its part. Morality is given a true spiritual significance by Indian philosophers. It is however treated only as a means to the end of self-realisation and not as an end in itself. Indian philosophers have from the very beginning discussed at great length about the doctrines of transmigration of the souls and the immortality of the soul, about which we find very little discussion in Western philosophies. The doctrine of transmigration of the souls is based on the theory of Karma or retribution according to which rewards and punishments are given as fruits of the good and bad deeds done severally by men in their previous lives. Every man is born here being sent by God to enjoy the fruits of his own deeds done in his past life. The doctrine of transmigration of the souls has been part and parcel of most of the schools of Indian philosophy from the very earliest times. Their conception of Moksha or final beatitude consists in freedom from the rounds of births and deaths and transmigration in this mortal world. The said ideas however are to be found only in a nascent state in the Vedas but they are developed later on in the Upanishads and thereafter in the Epics, Smritis and Darshanas or schools of philosophy. They all accept the doctrine of transmigration of the souls. By the law of Karma the individual souls are made to revolve innumerable rounds of births and deaths in this world as an atonement for the misdeeds done by them in their past lives until all sins are purged out by leading a high moral life, as enjoined in the Vedas and Dharma Shastras or codes of Law and there is a spiritual awakening ultimately by true knowledge as taught by the Upanishads and Vedanta which leads to Moksha. All the orthodox systems of Indian Philosophy and even the heterodox

system of Jaina Philosophy accept the above doctrine and the Law of Karma as axiomatic truths. The doctrine of transmigration of the souls was also believed by the Greek philosophers Plato, Empedocles, Pythagoras and others. Indian philosophy is not merely confined to dry dialectical discussions of the metaphysical problems of ontology, epistemology and cosmology but it has a definite and practical aim of realising the unity of spiritual self as the highest goal from a religious stand-point of a comprehensive nature which finds a permanent restive place in the eternal peace of the Absolute which is called Brahmi-sthiti, thus successfully tiding over the gulf of the apparent duality between mind and matter, subject and object, idealism and realism and transcendentalism and immanence. The above result was not brought about at once but only gradually by slow gradations from time to time culminating in the full-fledged doctrine of non-dual monism or transcendental unity of the Absolute as the highest fruit of the blossoms growing on the divine tree of the immortal Upanishads as explained by the great scholiast Shri Shankaracharya who was one of the greatest philosophers and theologians the world has ever produced

Immortality of the Soul

The doctrine of transmigration of the souls is related to the science of eschatology which treats of the fate of soul after death. According to the theory of Indian philosophy there are only two states of souls after death viz. a state of transmigration and rebirths in bodies of gods, human beings, or lower beings, and the state of emancipation, which are supported by the doctrine of immortality of the soul. This doctrine was accepted even by the Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Some of the materialistic philosophers of the West do not accept the above doctrine of immortality of the soul and they offer two theories about the state of the soul after death viz. that there is a total annihilation of the soul after death or there is eternal retribution which is meted out once for all to all souls on the day of resurrection as believed in the theologies of the Christian, Zoroastrian and the Mahomedan religions. Professor Paul Deussen has given the following answer to the above theories. As regards the theory of annihilation, he says that annihilation is in conflict with

man's love for life and his infinite faculty or desire for certainty which is more deeply rooted than even the metaphysical knowledge that spirit as such has no birth or dissolution. As regards the second theory of eternal retribution, Professor Deussen argues that it opens the prospect of eternal reward or punishment for an existence of the soul in this world which is so brief and liable to errors and accident that the said theory cannot be supported on rational grounds. Dr Anna Berant also accepts the doctrine of transmigration and she expresses her views on the subject as follows —

'With reincarnation man is dignified immortal being evolving towards a distinctly glorious end without it he is a tossing straw on the stream of chance circumstances, irresponsible for his character, for his actions and for his destiny. With it he may look forward with fearless hope however low in the scale of evolution he may be to-day for he is on the ladder to divinity and his climbing to its summit is only a question of time. Without it he has no reasonable ground of assurance as to progress in the future nor indeed any reasonable ground of assurance in future at all.

The main difficulty with many people in the reception of the doctrine of reincarnation is their own absence of memory of their past, yet they are every day familiar with the fact that they have forgotten very much even of their lives in their present bodies and that the early years of childhood are blurred and those of infancy a blank. They must also know that events of the past which have entirely slipped out of their normal consciousness are yet hidden away in dark caves of memory and can be brought out again vividly in some form of disease or under the influence of mesmerism. The doctrine of transmigration of the soul is based on the theory of Karma or moral retribution which is justified on rational grounds.

(5) The Doctrine of Evil and Freedom of the Choice

We have seen above that the doctrine of transmigration of the souls is based on the theory of Karma or Moral Law according to which every person is responsible for the deeds done by him whether good or bad and which presupposes a freedom of the choice and ability

to do what he wishes. It only expresses in another form the working of the natural law of cause and effect which must be eternally operative. The law says "As you sow, so shall you reap." Man is however distinguished from nature in as much as he is a rational and responsible being, being endowed with mind by which he can choose and determine what action he shall adopt. His actions are not therefore quite mechanical as those of nature which has no thinking mind. Human actions are responsible and they presuppose complete Freedom of the choice. Man is therefore governed by the moral law which is distinguished from the mechanical law governing nature, otherwise called the law of causation. Man is not a mere automaton acting mechanically but being endowed with mind and intellect, he is a rational being. Freedom or liberty which constitutes the rational nature of a man would have no meaning unless he had the power to determine and regulate his actions according to his ideas and thoughts. The problem of sin or evil has puzzled the minds of the Western philosophers from old and they have not been able to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problem in the absence of knowledge of the true philosophical basis thereof. As a matter of fact, evil is not regarded as the result of a rebellion against God as postulated in theology but it is the inevitable consequence of a mistake or ignorance of the moral law. There is no punishment but an inevitable consequence of wrong doing which it was possible for one to prevent by right thinking and willing. If a man commits sin or makes mistakes he has to suffer the consequences of the violation of the moral law as long as he is a victim of errors. In the same way right doing must be rewarded for the same reason. It is a wrong notion to believe that there is anything intrinsically evil in nature. As a matter of fact, there is no evil power having an ultimate reality or a real objective existence like Satan, apart from and independent of the Supreme Being or God, whose real nature consists of good only. The above notion owes its rise to the doctrine of dualism of the Christian theology which postulates Satan as a separate entity in opposition to God, but which is false as pointed above. The true principle is that sin is its own punishment and righteousness is its own reward according to the moral law of Karma. "The problem of

evil will be met only to the degree that we cease doing evil and do good, for evil will disappear when we no longer indulge in it. When the whole world sees the right and does the right, then and not until then will the problem of evil be solved for the entire race." A question is often asked why sin or evil was at all created by God? But this is on the hypothesis that sin or evil as opposed to good is something real and permanent. The hypothesis is however false as pointed out above and so the above question is untenable. The real philosophical explanation however is that man being a rational being and not a mechanical automaton, he must suffer on the road to self-realisation and suffering is necessary for an all round experience of life which otherwise would be one-sided and mechanical. This however does not mean that pain or evil is real but it is transitional only.

(6) Means of Knowledge

Having considered above the various subjects constituting the domain of philosophy, it is necessary to consider what are the means of right knowledge according to the various schools of Indian philosophy. It may be stated that no true knowledge of any subject whether physical or metaphysical, can be acquired, without right means of knowledge. Different schools have therefore prescribed different means for acquiring knowledge of the cardinal doctrines of philosophy, such as Perception, Inference, Analogy, Presumption, Revelation, Intuition, Tradition etc. The relative value and authority of the above means of knowledge is not the same for all schools but the same varies with different schools as will be pointed out while explaining the cardinal doctrines of the said schools. Suffice it to say for the present that it is very necessary that the reader of Indian Philosophy should have a clear understanding of the various means of knowledge as recognised in the various schools and their relative value and authority so as to enable him to have a thorough grasp of the cardinal doctrines of the said schools. It is only after a thorough understanding of the principles governing the various means of knowledge as advocated by the different schools of Indian philosophy that the aspirant after truth can achieve final beatitude or Moksha which is the summum bonum of life.

Their Relative Value and Authority.

Now as regards the relative value and authority of the above means of knowledge, the Mimansakas and the Vedantins look upon the Vedas or the Revealed Texts as of highest authority and having a greater authority than reason or inference while the Sankhyas look upon Inference as of higher authority than the Revealed Texts.

Inference or Reason.

Inference or reason is also an important means of knowledge. But according to the Vedanta view, to be authoritative on problems of philosophy reason must not be opposed to or inconsistent with the Revealed Texts.

Vedas or Shrutis.

It may be stated here that according to the orthodox view the Vedas or Shrutis which constitute the Revealed Texts of the Hindus are the highest source of authority and knowledge. Their conception of the Revealed Texts however is quite different from that of other religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Revealed Texts of the Hindus include the Mantras, Brahmanas and the Upanishads. Unlike the Holy Bible and the Koran, which also claim to be Revealed books, the Vedas are not treated as books composed by one man or a prophet embodying his precepts, sayings and doings but are deemed to embody the wisdom and knowledge of eternal truths as revealed to and seen by the various seers or Rishis by Intuition or direct vision, and which has an objective validity for all times and for all persons. The Vedas therefore contain eternal truths and have an objective and universal validity. According to the Mimansakas the words of the Vedas do not stand for any individual objects but they symbolise and connote the Akutis or genus i. e. class concepts which correspond to the objects denoted by them. The concepts are deemed to be inseparably and eternally connected with the words of the Vedas which have therefore an eternal meaning and objectivity. The same words always correspond to the same objects without any subjective element in the form of feelings or prejudices of any individual human being. It is in this sense that the Mimansakas call the

Vedas Apaurusheya i.e. not created by any individual human being who is likely to mix up his utterances with his personal prejudices and feelings and thus distort the true meaning of the words voiced by him. The Vedas are infallible and contain eternal truths. The Vedantins also accept the above view of the Mimamsakas and they believe the Vedas to be eternal and infallible.

Intuition

The Vedantins however believe in the superior value and efficacy of Intuition or superconscious experience as the direct and immediate means of knowledge so as to ensure the certainty and objective validity of the knowledge conveyed by the words of the Vedas as Revealed Texts. Intuition thus occupies a very prominent place in Indian philosophy as a means to the acquisition of right knowledge.

Perception.

Perception is knowledge acquired by the senses. It is useful only in acquiring a superficial knowledge of the outward names and forms of objects as they present themselves to our senses. The knowledge of the outward presentments of objects thus acquired by us through our senses is only an appearance and not a reality according to the Vedanta view which is at present accepted even by some of the eminent philosophers of the West like Bradley and others.

Smritis

Next to Shruti or Revealed Texts as authority according to the orthodox view come Smritis which mean books composed by human authors but based on Shrutis or Revealed Texts so far they are remembered by the authors. The Smritis as sources of authority include various Dharma Shastras or codes of law and duties whether religious, social or moral compiled by venerable Rishis like Manu, Yajurvedy, Vasishtha, Narada and others. They also comprehend the two well-known epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana which in addition to teaching the incidents of history also contain important discussions relating to ethics, religion and philosophy. Smritis further include Puranas which explain in a popular way the various philosophical and religious problems by the use of apt and homely illustrations, anecdotes and mythologies.

They lastly comprise Sutras or aphorisms dealing in short with the doctrines of the different schools of philosophy such as the Nyaya Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Purva-mimansa and Uttara-mimansa or Vedanta. Various Bhashyas or commentaries thereon have been written by various commentators.

Mimansa-Rules of Interpretation.

In dealing with the subject of the different means of knowledge according to the different schools of Indian Philosophy, it would be necessary to consider the rules laid down by Purva Mimansa for a true interpretation of the various Texts of Shrutis and Smritis, as a thorough knowledge and understanding of the said rules is indispensable to a proper understanding of the meanings of the several texts and dogmas contained in the different text-books prescribed as authorities in the different schools. Without such knowledge it is not possible for anyone to have a thorough knowledge of the cardinal doctrines of philosophy taught in the different schools. Though the subject of interpretation of the Texts does not properly form a part of philosophy a knowledge of its rules is necessary from a practical point of view, to understand the principles of philosophy taught in the said schools. Even for purposes of Law Courts it often becomes necessary to have a proper knowledge of the rules of interpretation of the Hindu Law Texts governing a particular case. For a proper and just decision of any important case on Hindu Law by Courts of justice, it is quite necessary that the deciding Court must have a thorough knowledge of the Mimansa rules of interpretation of the Hindu Law Texts governing the case in question. In the absence of such knowledge on the part of the Judges deciding such cases there is every likelihood of miscarriage of justice being done to the parties.

(7) Historic Survey.

It has been stated by an eminent scholar that India has been a nation of philosophers having produced a galaxy of wise thinkers and geniuses from the earliest times beginning with the Vedas of hoary antiquity down to the modern period. Thus we find in the list of philosophers the names of Apantaratamas, Vashistha, Vishwamitra, Vamdeva, Yajnavalkya, Sanat-kumara, Shandilya and others as

Vedic seers, Gautama Buddha and Mahavira as religious reformers and founders of the Buddha and Jaina schools of philosophy, Jaimini and Vyasa as the founders of the Purva-mimansa and Uttara-mimansa or Vedanta schools of philosophy respectively, Kumarila Bhatta and Shankaracharya the well-known commentators on the Mimansa and Vedanta Sutras respectively, Kapila, Asuri and Panchashukhi as the founders and propagators of the Sankhya Philosophy, Patanjali as the author of the Yoga Sutras, Gotama and Kanada as the founders of the Nyaya and Vaisheshika schools of philosophy and Vatsyayana and Prasastapada the well-known commentators of the Nyaya and Vaisheshika Sutras of Gotama and Kanada. The above philosophers and several others have made themselves famous by their valuable publications and treatises on philosophy

On taking a historic survey and following the trend of thought of the Indian philosophers, one finds a regular evolution and development of thought which gave rise to different schools of philosophy in different periods. It culminated ultimately in the doctrine of Indian monism in the school of Vedanta as the very essence of Indian philosophy as exposed by that eminent and world renowned scholar and philosopher Shankaracharya who was born in about the eighth century of the Christian era in his commentaries on the Upanishads, Gita and the Vedanta. The said Bhaskyas so far from being mere commentaries may in fact be regarded as the real body of Vedanta doctrines containing the very quintessence of Indian philosophy which has captivated the minds of not only the large majority of Indian people but also of several Western philosophers and is the most popular of all schools of philosophy at present studied in India.

Reconciliation of Apparent Conflicts.

The most difficult problem that has engaged the serious attention of different philosophers from time to time is the task of reconciliation of unity with plurality and the apparent conflict between nature and man, matter and mind and body and soul which seem to have been arrayed against each other competing for rivalry and superiority from times immemorial. In addition to solving the above problems,

Indian philosophy has also attempted to accomplish another equally difficult task of reconciling conflicting Texts so as to deduce therefrom one uniform meaning from a rational stand-point and bring about a satisfactory solution of all the apparent conflicts. It may be stated here that no one has been so successful in the above task as Shankaracharya as is admitted even by such eminent Western critics and scholars like Thibaut, Jacob, Gough, Prof Maxmuller and Dr Paul Deussen. By his system of philosophy known as non-dual monism or transcendental unity, Shankara has performed one of the most marvellous and daring feats that one could think of whereby he has succeeded in steering clear of all difficulties and tiding over the apparent gulf of the duality of spirit and nature, mind and matter and soul and body, by reconciling them with the Absolute or Reality as aspects thereof and having a relative value but no independent existence, apart from the Absolute.

(8) The Gist of the Teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads.

In this connection it may be mentioned that although both Mimamsa and the Vedanta are agreed in recognising Vedas or Shrutis as the highest authorities, there is a fundamental difference in their views as to the gist of the teachings of the Vedas.

Mimamsa View.

According to Mimamsa the main purpose of the Vedas is to teach righteous action or Dharma including therein observance of sacrificial rites in obedience to the injunctions of Vedic Texts. This view is carried so far by Jaimini the author of the Purva-Mimamsa Sutras that if any Text of the Vedas does not contain any statement enjoining an imperative action called Vidhi-vakya it loses all authoritative force and is reduced to the position of a mere explanatory statement or Artha-vada which serves the subsidiary purpose of explaining or eulogising the principal text enjoining action.¹

Vedanta View.

The Vedanta school has however taken exception to the above mode of interpretation of the Vedic Texts by the Mimansakas and

¹ J. S. 1-2-7.

it holds the view that the real purpose of the Vedic Texts and in particular the Upanishads which form the last part of the Vedas and called the Vedanta is to teach the knowledge of the highest philosophical truths and principles, which are in no way subsidiary to action but independent of action, although it believes in the utility of moral, social and ritualistic actions as means to the acquisition of knowledge. It will be thus seen that according to Vedanta works as taught by the Vedic Texts are useful adjuncts and preliminary aids to the acquisition of philosophical wisdom and knowledge. But the highest end of life known as Moksha or final beatitude which is the summum bonum of life cannot be achieved by mere actions whether moral, social or ritualistic divorced from knowledge or by any other means than the highest knowledge as taught in the Upanishads and the Vedanta. The same idea is repeated in the Bhagwad Gita which is one of the Prasthanas-trays or the three sets of the canonical books of authority recognised by Shankara and several other venerable Acharyas after him.

(9) The Paths of Devotion & Knowledge

Some of the modern Vaishnava-acharyas after Shankara as Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Madhva have however preached the new doctrine Bhakti-marga or the path of devotion by which a man can achieve his Moksha or summum bonum of life by Divine Grace of the Lord without any reference to action and knowledge and independently of them. Of the teachers holding the above view the foremost is Vallabha according to whom Bhakti-marga or the method of devotion is even superior to that of knowledge and wisdom. This view is however opposed to the teachings of the Upanishads and Vedanta as explained by Shankara according to whom Moksha or the final beatitude could not be achieved by any means other than knowledge as taught in the Vedanta.¹ Devotion is only a kind of action which is only a means to the end of realisation of the ultimate unity and not the end in itself. As a matter of fact Shri Krishna has pointed out to Arjuna in the Bhagwad Gita² "that there are only two methods of realising the highest end of life viz the Sankhya

method of knowledge and the Yoga method of action". The method of devotion is included in the method of action. The Mantia and the Brahmana portions of the Vedas are called the Karma-Kanda which deal with works of all kinds and include prayers to God, while the Upnishad portion of the Vedas is called the Jnana Kanda which teaches knowledge of the Supreme Being or the Absolute as the summum bonum of life. The Upanishads also consist of two parts viz. the Upasana Kanda or Theology dealing with the various practices and modes of worship of God and the Jnana-Kanda or metaphysics proper teaching the great philosophical truths. These two parts of the Upanishads are quite distinct having distinct scopes and purposes of their own, and they cannot be mixed up though the object to be worshipped and known is the same. It is called Ishwara (God,) Para Brahma or Paramatman. The Metaphysical portion of the Upanishads dealing inter alia with the subject of Ontology, explains the exact nature or Swarupa of the Absolute as the highest spiritual self in all its bearings and aspects whether phenomenal or transcendental and also the exact relations between God, nature and man which practically cover the whole ground constituting the main subjects of philosophy proper. It thus contains the substantive part of philosophy which is the most important part for our purposes. The theological portion of the Upanishads on the other hand deals with the modes of prayers to God and it contains the procedural part of philosophy showing the modes of application of philosophical principles to its main purpose of self-realisation and Moksha as the summum bonum of life.

(10) Reconciliation of Monotheism with Monism.

This introduces us to the most important subject of monotheism and monism as to which opinions of different philosophers seem divided. Some philosophers having a theological bias believe that the highest reality is God having a distinct personality and the summum bonum of life or Moksha according to them consists in a state of companionship and blissful union with God whether after death when it is called *Vegeta-Mukti* or during life when it is called *Jivan-Mukti*. Other philosophers however having a metaphysical turn of mind believe that

the highest reality is impersonal and is called the Absolute having a distinct being of its own separate from the relations of the phenomenal world which are not denied but which have their existence within the Absolute in a mysterious and miraculous way by the Maya-Shakti of the Absolute, in a non-dual unity whereby the objects of the phenomenal world which seem divided to the unphilosophical minds find their integral being and unity in the Absolute in a harmonious way. It is a pure misconception on the part of the theists to believe that their personal God is a Being separate from the Absolute as conceived by the philosophers or even superior to the Absolute. As a matter of fact God who is viewed as a personal Being by the theists is not separate from or other than the Absolute. The conception of God in the monotheists as the creator governor and ruler of the phenomenal universe is based on the doctrine of relativity which has no ultimate reality independent of the Absolute as pointed out above, and also as recently proved by several eminent philosophers of the West as Bradley and Einstein. It does not give us a true idea of the real nature of God in His pristine purity and entirety so as to free Him from the limitations of time space and causation, which constitute the a priori and fundamental postulates of the phenomenal world with its apparently divided units which veil and shut out from us the true knowledge of the real nature and unity of God. Besides the theists taking their stand on the relativity of the phenomenal world, by their doctrine of monotheism are unable to tide over the wide gulf between subject and object as opposed to each other. Further the conception of God of the theists as a personal Being is not free from traces of anthropomorphism and the limitations thereof. For the above reasons the theistic conception of God is imperfect and it does not give us a correct idea of the whole philosophical truth.

As against the above view of the theists, the monistic philosophers gave us a better idea of the real nature or Swarupa of the Absolute as Sacchidananda i.e. the Supreme Being of Infinite Truth, Wisdom and Bliss in its pristine purity transcending all limitations of time, space and causation and the ceaseless opposition

created by the barriers of the seeming duality of the phenomenal world. Besides, the Absolute of the Philosophers by his wonderful and mysterious Maya-Shakti or potential energy which is always innate in Him has also the intrinsic capacity of assuming the role of a personal God as the creator, governor and ruler of this universe of relativity by His natural and moral laws, thus meeting and satisfying the practical needs of theology. The Absolute of the monists is conceived as a triune unity in its three-fold aspects called the spiritual, intellectual and physical which preserves the integrity and harmony of the cosmos as a whole. There is no breach at any time in the harmonious unity and working of the cosmos as a whole which is ever evolving new shapes and forms of a variegated nature within the Absolute under Divine guidance and control, until it achieves its final purpose and fruition by securing a permanent restive place of eternal peace to all within the Absolute. This is in short the doctrine of Indian Monism a knowledge of which is calculated to uproot from society all social, political and communal strifes and discords that are found prevailing in almost all countries, all over the world, and bring about a universal integration and solidarity of all persons inhabiting the different parts of the globe as members of a living organism and foster among them feelings of universal love and brotherhood, as members of a universal fellowship under the Kingdom of God.

(ii) Hindu religion and its comprehensiveness

Sanātana Religion

An opinion now to prevail in certain quarters that the Hindu religion known as Sanatan religion means a religion relating to the observance of the part of the orthodox Hindus of certain rites and rituals and caste rules and customs in matters affecting touch, food, drink, marriage, purity, penances and so on only. But this is far from truth. Sanatan religion is not a sectarian religion but it is an eternal religion which is very comprehensive in its nature and extent. The very term Sanatan suggests that it is an eternal religion revealed by God for all time—past, present, and future and that it deals with principles of eternal truths, eternal laws and eternal practices for individuals of all castes, creeds and sects as well as the whole society. The holy Bhagavad Gita describes the highest Lord as the guardian of eternal religion (Shāśvata Dharma).¹ Sanatan religion does not profess to be a sectarian religion for a certain class of persons following dogmas of particular castes, creeds or sects only but it is a religion of eternal principles having a universal application. Sanatan religion was not promulgated by a particular person, saint or prophet at a definite time in history as in the case of other religions as Islam, Judaism, Christianity and so on but it was revealed by God to the sages and seers of India in the form of eternal principles and truths as manifested in the Vedas of hoary antiquity and which has been practised by the Aryans since ages past down to the present times by an unbroken tradition without any break in continuity. This affords a strange contrast to other religions which were started at definite times in history by certain prophets and saints as Mahomed, Moses, Jesus Christ and so on. Sanatan religion is a very broad and comprehensive religion and it includes the religion of works, duties and conduct called *Karma Mārga* as prescribed by the sacred laws as also the religion of faith, belief, and devotion called *Bhakti Mārga*, and the religion of knowledge called *Jñāna Mārga*. These constitute the practical and theoretical portions of Sanatan religion. The practical portion of Sanatan religion deals with rules and regul-

tions about conduct in relation to individuals and society e.g. those relating to caste and orders of life (*Varnāśrama*) and rites and rituals and other rules of conduct as laid down in S'hruti (Revealed Texts as Vedas, Brāhmanas and Upanishads), Smṛiti (tradition and sacred Law) and Purānas (religious treatises dealing with Mythologies and narratives relating to the different gods and goddesses as worshipped by the Hindus and so on), while the theoretical portion deals with doctrines of faith, principles of devotion as in several theologies, and abstruse principles of metaphysics and philosophy as contained in the Vedas, the Upanishads, and treatises of various schools of philosophy and religion founded by different teachers, prophets and saints as Shankarāchārya, Rāmānujāchārya, Madhwāchārya, Vallabhāchārya, Rāmānand, Tulsidās, Chaitanya, Jnāneshvar, Tukārām, Narsinha Mehtā, Mirābāi and so on India is a land of philosophers and saints and it has produced a galaxy of men who have started various schools of philosophical and religious thoughts from time to time I shall deal with these in volumes 2 and 3 which will be published hereafter. Both these portions of religion were complements of each other and neither was sufficient by itself to constitute Sanātana religion as a whole Theory needs practice and practice needs theory No perfection could be attained by any man in any science or art without proficiency in both theory and practice. Similarly to be perfect in religion a man must be proficient in the knowledge of both its theoretical and practical sides. The theology of the Hindus has one peculiarity which distinguishes it from the theologies of other religions viz, that it has a capacity of accommodating itself to persons of all ranks and grades of thought and culture by providing different modes of worship of God as pure and impersonal Brahman, personal God, local gods and goddesses, incarnations of God, prophets, saints and so on to suit the varying tastes and temperaments of different persons which can never be of one kind only This has one salutary effect of fostering a spirit of great toleration in the minds of the Sanātana Hindus for all possible kinds and varieties of worship as seen in the numerous cults, creeds, and sects among them all over the country, and they are also free from a spirit of exclusiveness, sectarianism and dogmatism which cannot tolerate any other mode of worship as seen in several other religions.

The Hindu system of religion known as Sanātān religion is so wide, comprehensive and elastic that it is capable of assimilating any number of apparently heterogeneous and diverse systems of thought and worship. The principles of Sanātān religion are true for all time so as to fully justify its title of eternal religion.

Definitions of Religion.

Religion has been defined in various ways by different sages. Thus Jaimini the author of Purva Mimamsa defines religion as that which is distinguished by a command or an injunction,¹ the fulfilment of which leads to an unseen religious merit called (Apuṛva) and an abode in paradise after death. According to Jaimini every man desirous of securing celestial happiness after death must fulfil the sacred duties imposed on him by the sacred laws as contained in the Vedas (scriptures) and Smṛitis, and any omission in this constitutes a sin which leads to suffering and punishment unless atoned for by a confession and performance of penances and austerities as prescribed in the Śāstras. This definition deals more with the practical side of religion. Kanāda the author of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy on the other hand, defines religion as "that which leads to elevation and prosperity in this life and supreme beatitude or liberation in the life to come after death,"² thus laying emphasis on both its theoretical as well as practical sides. The word *Dharma* which ordinarily means religion is often used in a loose sense and it means conduct, duty, righteousness, spiritual merit, law, or religion. It is derived from the root *Dhr* to hold and it means that by which a man is held in position and saved from a fall, thus distinguishing itself from irreligion and impiety which seek after exclusive gratification of sensual desires and material aggrandisement and consequent downfall of one from a religious standpoint. Thus conduct which seeks after worldly comforts and material prosperity only of an individual to the exclusion of other members of society cannot be said to be religious as religion partakes of the element of social side as its ingredient. In fact Dr Deshmukh in his thesis on Religion in Vedic Literature which brought on him the Degree of Doctorate of philosophy defines religion as follows. Thus he says

"A religion is a social institution having a set of principles, doctrines, beliefs and practices, and certain more or less imperative rules of conduct which are in accordance with those principles, doctrines, and beliefs and which aim at furthering human happiness."* "The Sanskrit language has no word equivalent to what is understood by religion. Nor is there an English equivalent for the Sanskrit word "Dharma" which is indeed the nearest term which expresses the sense of the word religion." The word *Dharma* is generally used in the sense of either religion or morality according as either sense predominates over the other. In both senses it has reference to the social side. Religion thus consists of two elements viz. *Beliefs* and *practices* rather than any one of these constituents in particular as I have already shown above. The above definition of religion would include "the feelings, acts and experience of individual men, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the *divine*, whether such relation may be *moral, physical, or ritual*." It may be stated in general that theologies, philosophies and ecclesiastical organizations grow out of religion in the above sense. Though Sanātan religion presupposes a belief in the existence of God, yet a great controversy is raised by some over the necessity of a belief in God in defining religion in a broad sense. There are systems of thought which are usually called religious, yet which do not positively assume a God. Thus Buddhism and Jainism are recognised and known to be religious systems though they are both atheistic and refuse to assume the existence of God. Similarly, modern transcendental idealism also seems to let God in the sense of a superhuman person evaporate into abstract ideality by its doctrine of immanent divinity in the very nature of the whole universe. It is said that "the essentially spiritual structure of the universe is the object of the transcendental cult."

(12) Trend of modern science more towards spiritualism rather than materialism.

It is now admitted even by the great scientists of the West that the phenomenal world of material objects and nature with its infinite variety of names and forms all based on the fundamental

* (Origin and development of Religion in Vedic Literature by Dr. P. S. Deshmukh).

postulates of time, space and matter relations is neither complete nor perfect. The theory of relativity of Einstein has clearly shown to the world that the time, space and causal forms of the phenomenal world are not absolute and real but they are within the realm of relativity only which presupposes as its counter part the assumption of the Absolute. The atomic theory has been exploded long ago by eminent scientists of the West and an atom is no more believed to be an indivisible final unit in the universe. The later theory of electrons has shown that an atom is neither indestructible nor indivisible, but that it is split up into innumerable smaller units called electrons each of which is surcharged with electric charges of different magnitudes. But even this theory is now abandoned and the minute units into which matter is divided and subdivided all charged with electric energy are not final objects but they are only relations of time, space and energy which imperceptibly merge into one another and even to the boundless real annihilating all relations of time, space and content. The trend of thought of the great physicists and scientists of modern times converges more clearly towards idealism rather than materialism and is pointing to something far beyond the present. The modern idealists and even several eminent scientists too seem to explain matter by mind. The implications of Einstein's theory of relativity clearly seem to lead to theology and religion as having a final say on the problem of reality. "Space and time are relative to matter," and even "matter must be resolved into action." This gives us a crux of the whole problem. Materialism is now quite dead and we are led to soar into the higher realms of idealism and spiritualism having eternal values, so as to present to us a glimpse of the supreme true and absolute reality which is beyond this universe of space, time, and matter which thenceforth gives to us a new significance altogether as having its being in infinity by divine enlightenment and a spiritual vision. No progress in science or materialism will ever land us on the higher realms of spiritualism and supreme bliss and the happiness resulting therefrom. But it is the province of Religion in its essence only as belonging to our personal life and experience and the means laid down therein to land us on the higher realms of our vision and our highest destination of life. The great sages of India had all realized the

supreme purpose of life and achieved final emancipation and perfect bliss by following the path of religion only, and not the path of materialism which leads a man to degradation only.

(13) Contrast of Eastern and Western standpoints of religion.

Religion has been the source of great solace, strength and sustenance to thousands in their calamities, bereavements, and misfortunes of life and they have found in the Eternal and changeless their only refuge from the miseries and sorrows of life by a loving and devotional faith in His beneficent powers, just laws and His wise dispensation of justice which is always tempered with mercy. It may be however mentioned here that the standpoint of religion in the East differs materially from that in the West. In India, philosophical thought has exercised an enormous influence upon the Hindu mind which has always shown a great fascination for abstract mystical speculations and evinced a greater regard for the infinite than the finite. The frame of Hindu mind was such that it always yearned for a peaceful rest and an eternal abode in the bosom of the changeless and the eternal. Indian philosophy was sought to root out the very source of unrest in man by securing an eternal place in the highest divinity which was also conceived as a Supra Moral Being by the Hindu theologians who pointed out to their followers seeking final emancipation the easiest means of having a sole refuge in Him as a Friend, Father and Philosopher, by a loving service to Him accompanied with Faith and Devotion. Thus theology was always wedded to philosophy in the East unlike the West where theology was generally divorced from philosophy. The fundamental motive in both religion and philosophy was the same though the ways and means of achieving the final goal were different. In India all the great philosophers as Rāmānuja, Shankara, Vallabha and others were also great theologians and teachers of religious learning who founded different schools of religious and philosophical thoughts known as *Kevalādvaita* (non-dual monism), *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (distinguished monism), *Suddhādvaita* (pure monism) and so on. Again the religious and philosophical systems in the East were saturated with deep feelings of pessimism and they dwelt on the vanity of life which is conceived as full of miseries and suffering. In fact most of the said systems e.g. Vedānt as in the school of Shankara, Buddhism, Jainism and so on

are full of pessimism. As contrasted with Indian philosophy the the philosophy of the Greeks was more optimistic and although the Greeks were great thinkers and took delight in speculative thought on the higher problems of life and metaphysics, yet they took the world to be a place of rest and happiness and they did not agree with the Indian view that life was essentially miserable. Again the Hindu standpoint of religion was more subjective than objective unlike that in the West where the religious standpoint was more objective than subjective. Thus the Greek systems of religious thought dwelt on the healthiness of earthly life and their outlook showed more an objective turn of mind with a characteristic optimism and a taste for high arts and aesthetics. The Greeks had a great love for life itself and for all that was earthly and they started several social and political institutions which were brought to perfection and they also attached a high value to physical and intellectual perfection and beauty. The Hindu outlook on the other hand was more inward and subjective and the Hindus preferred more a life of poverty, renunciation and self-control to a life of ease and comfort. The Hindu mind preferred more over the deeper problems of existence and metaphysics rather than those relating to secular life as politics, sciences, arts, and so on which were practically neglected by them and in which they have made little progress as compared with the Greeks and other Western nations. The Hindu and Buddhist systems of religious thought were essentially metaphysical rather than physical or physiological. The problem of existence was fundamental with them and it engaged their attention most while the problem of conduct was secondary. Ethics did not play such an important part in Indian schools of religious thought as Metaphysics and theology. Ethics had its utility in the Indian schools but it played a subordinate part. Moral life was useful as a preparatory means only to a higher and a philosophical mode of life. Ethics was never an end in itself in the Indian schools but it was a means only to the supreme end of self-realisation which was achieved by a philosophical wisdom only and not ethics. The Hindu view of life traced all evil to error and ignorance which in their turn brought about a ceaseless desire for worldly and sensual objects and consequent suffering. The remedy for conquering

evil and suffering was intellectual and not volitional. Men therefore had recourse to philosophy and a contemplative and devotional mode of life directed to God and not to morality to conquer all the ills of life.

(14) Contrast between Eastern and Western systems of morality

As regards the differences between the different systems of morality and thought in the East and West, Mr M. A. Buch has made the following observations in his book on Hindu Ethics. "It is one of the differences between systems of morality like the Jewish, Islamic, Christian and Zoroastrian on the one hand and the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist systems on the other, that while the former glorify a life of action, of striving and willing and energy, the latter place above every thing else a life of mystic illumination, of perfect gnosis, of the highest realisation. The Greek also identified knowledge with virtue and vice with ignorance. Never was a nation so fond of contemplation as the Greeks. It was the ideal life of philosophers. It filled them with raptures x x. The whole force and energy of the Islamic and Jewish and Zoroastrian faith is directed to showing that life is a battle between opposing forces, between powers of light and darkness. All men figure as soldiers ranged on one side or the other. The Greeks thought of life not as a battle of mighty forces, not as a theatre of epic actions but as a riddle, a problem, an intellectual treat. The Hindus pictured life as a conflict between Māyā and Brahman, between ignorance and knowledge. Their whole aim was to go from non-existence to existence, from darkness to light." As regards the charge levelled against Hindu Ethics to the effect that it is mere subjective fancy, Mr. Buch has answered the same in the following manner. Thus he says "It must be said however to the credit of the Hindus that far from making all morality a mere subjective fancy, a private illusion, they made it the one central thing in this life. Morality or Karma is the one law dominating all life, human and infra human, but it is the special characteristic, the very prerogative of human beings. No being can transcend its limits, once launched into existence or Samsāra, its operation was inexorable. The Hindu view lays deep the foundations of moral life

in the very heart of the universe it is as objective, as real as the whole world itself. The whole universe comes into existence and vanishes solely under the influence of the law of Karma. Another point which is connected with this position is the objective validity of freedom of the will in the Hindu theory. Man's belief in himself as a center of fresh actions is not altogether an illusion. Man's self-consciousness becomes the basis of his whole life and this self-consciousness has as much reality as the objective world.*

(15) The sacred laws and traditions of the Āryans

According to the Vedic theory the main purpose of a man's life was fourfold viz., *Dharma* (religious duty) *Artha* (worldly prosperity), *Kāma* (sensual desires) and *Moksha* (spiritual emancipation). Of the above four objects of life *Dharma* or religious duty occupies the first place as a successful fulfilment of the other purposes of life depended entirely on the fulfilment of the religious duties enjoined on a man. In fact it is stated in the *Māhābhārata* that religion originates from good conduct (*Āchārah Paramo Dharmah*). The memorable verses in the *Māhābhārata* known as *Bhārata Sāvitrī* make the following encomium on virtue: "Raising up both my hands, I cry aloud but no one listens to my voice. From virtue results wealth and fulfilment of all desires. Why should not therefore virtue be practised? Virtue should not be abandoned for desire, fear, avarice, or even for life's sake. Virtue is eternal, joys and sorrows are fleeting. Soul is eternal but the root cause of its migrations is fleeting." The revered sage and law-giver Manu also lays down in his celebrated law code that good conduct (*Āchāra*) is transcendental religion (*Āchārah Paramo Dharmah*). The law-givers of India from the earliest times have framed minute rules and regulations as to conduct concerning both individuals as well as society on various subjects and matters relating to domestic, religious, social, moral, sacrificial, legal, and other spheres of a man's life which one was enjoined to observe minutely and scrupulously so as to secure an unseen religious merit called *Apūra* which brought an eternal abode in the heaven with its attendant pleasures by way of reward. The *Dharma Śāstras* which contain the sacred laws and traditions of the Āryans constitute the

* (The principles of Hindu Ethics by M. A. Buch)

with an unbroken continuity. The sacred laws along with the Vedas and canonical literature were thus preserved since the Vedic times of hoary antiquity till to-day by an unbroken tradition (*Paramparā*). The sacred laws with the rituals and rules of conduct therein which had their germs in the Vedas, Brāhmanas, and Upanishads were committed to memory by the Brāhmanas who transmitted the same orally from generation to generation by the traditional method.

Sacred laws and traditions in Sūtras and Smṛitis.

The sacred laws and traditions were arranged systematically by the law-givers who compiled them first in the form of *Sūtras* and afterwards in the form of *Smṛitis*. The Dharma Sūtras related to the rules of practical life, virtue, and law. The principal Dharma Sūtras were composed by Gotama, Bṛuddhāyana, Āpastambha, Vaishya, and Viṣṇu. Of these Gotama was the oldest being assigned the sixth century before Christ. The Dharma Śāstras or *Smṛitis* did not constitute one single book but they consisted of treatises composed by holy sages. The principal *Smṛitis* as enumerated by sage Yājñavalkya amounted to about twenty in number viz., those composed by Manu, Yājñavalkya, Atri, Viṣṇu, Harita, Uśanas, Angirā, Yama, Āpastambha, Samvarta, Kātyāyana, Bṛhaspati, Parāśara, Vyāsa, Sankha, Lakṣa, Gotama, Sātātapa and Vasistha.

Manu Smṛiti.

Of these Manu Smṛiti occupies the first rank and it is held in high esteem and considered as the highest authority on questions of religious precepts, sacred laws and traditions. It is said in a Vedic passage 'All that Manu said is medicine'. Manu was a Kṣatriya and a great sage whose name is mentioned in the Rig Veda, as the ancestor of mankind. The Manu Smṛiti in its present form seems to have been based on Mānava Dharma Sūtras which seem to have been lost and are not available at present. Dr Bühler assigns to Manu Smṛiti in its present form a date between 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. There are several well known commentaries on Manu of which the important ones are those of Medhātithi, Kulluka Bhatta, and Govindarāja.

Yājñavalkya Smṛiti

The next important Smṛiti was that of the Sage Yājñavalkya which is assigned the date 300 to 400 A. D. approximately. The arrangement in Yājñavalkya is better than in Manu. It is divided into three chapters of about the same length dealing with *Āchāra* (conduct), *Vyavahāra* (law), and *Prāyaschitta* (penance) respectively. There are several commentaries on Yājñavalkya of which the important ones are those of Aparāika and Vijnāneshwara. The last one is called *Mitākshara* which constitutes an important treatise on Hindu law as governing the Hindus in general.

Other Smritis.

The Smritis dealing specially with religious and secular laws in addition to those of Manu (200 B. C. to 200 A. D.), and Yājñavalkya (300 A. D.), were those of Nārada (500 to 600 A. D.), Bṛhaspati (600 to 700 A. D.), Kātyāyana (600 to 700 A. D.) and so on. These Smritis deal with the religious laws and rules of conduct as governing and regulating the life and conduct of the people in general and they have laid down in particular elaborate rules relating to the social order of the four castes (*Varnas*) and the four stages of life (*Āśramas*) and the duties to be observed by men and women in general.

(16) The institution of caste (chātūr Varna).

Caste-a social and national institution.

The social order of castes was a divine institution of great antiquity being traced to the R̥g Veda and even earlier. Of the four castes the first three viz, the Brāhmins (priestly class), the Kshatriyas (warrior class), and the Vaisyas (merchant class) were called *Dvijas* or the twice born on account of their being entitled to the initiation of sacred thread ceremony (*Upanayana*), the study of the Vedas and the right to perform Vedic sacrifices. The fourth caste included Sūdras (servant class) who were not entitled by reason of their low birth to initiation and other sacred rights mentioned above which were reserved only for persons of the three higher castes who were entitled to these from birth.

The Brahmins were the spiritual guides of the people who knew the Vedas by heart and were well versed in the sacred lore

Hence the Brāhman caste was the highest. The Kshatriyas formed the military caste. They protected the Brāhmins and their sacred religion. The Vaisya formed the trading caste who did service to society by spending moneys earned by them by trade, agriculture and so on for benevolent and charitable purposes and objects useful to society. The last caste was that of Sudras who along with members of the other castes were also members of the body corporate which constituted the whole society as an indivisible entity. They did service to society by manual labour, mechanical occupations, and certain arts and industries specially allowed to them.

Organic unity of the castes

According to the Vedic theory, the four castes Brāhman (priestly class) Kshatriya (military class) Vaisya (trading class) and Sudra (servant class) constituted the four limbs viz., the head, the arms the thighs and the feet of Virāt Purusha or the Creator of the universe, as representing learning military strength, economic resources and mechanical labour possessed by them respectively. The reader will thus see that there was an organic unity at the back of all the castes which were never separate or detached from one another so as to cause a breach in the homogeneity or integral unity of the society at any time. The institution of caste was a social institution which was based on the principle of division of labour each caste being assigned certain professions which its members were enjoined to follow in the best manner and achieve perfection therein by doing some good to society as a whole by a loving co-operation with persons of other castes without any spirit of rivalry or competition with them. In short the Hindu castes were permeated with a central unity. Even the Sudras and backward castes were parts and parcels of the Āryan society which had an organic unity. The three higher castes lived peacefully with the Sudras and backward castes towards whom they never showed any apathy or aversion at any time. Thus for example the rite of 5 great sacrifices (*Pancha Mahā Yajnas*) included a special sacrifice called *Bhūta Iajna* or the rite of making offerings of food to the poor the outcasts, and even the untouchables (*Chāndālas*) as a part of the daily obligatory religious duties to be fulfilled by every Āryan belonging to the three higher castes who was enjoined by

a religious commandment to do some good to all the members of society including the worst sinners, outcasts, and even the untouchables (*Chāndālas*) who were not neglected by them.

The institution of the five great sacrifices (*Pancha Mahā Yajnas*) and social service.

Every Āryan was taught to do some kind of social service with a spirit of love and tenderness to all creatures including the mute and dumb animals, insects, birds, and even the poor and destitute by the rite of five great sacrifices (*Pancha Māhā Yajna*) which was a part of his daily obligatory religious duties. The rite of the five daily obligatory sacrifices to be performed by every Āryan thus included sacrifice to gods called *Deva Yajna* (i.e. offering burnt oblations to gods in the sacred fire) sacrifice to the sages called *Brahma Yajna* (i.e. repeating the Vedas) sacrifice to the fathers and deceased ancestors called *Putri Yajna* (i.e. offering libations of water (*Tarpana*) and balls of rice (*Pinda*) with faith to the manes of deceased fathers and ancestors accompanied with dinner to Brāhmans called (*Shrāddhas*), sacrifice to living creatures called *Bhūta Yajna* (i.e. offering food to living creatures including poor or helpless persons) and sacrifice to man called *Nara Yajna* which enjoined on every householder the pious duty of giving hospitable reception to his guests by providing shelter, food, drink and good treatment. The rule laying down the duty of showing hospitality to a guest as a part of the daily obligatory duties of every Āryan is a clear extension into Hindu religion of the principle of social service which is much spoken of at present as if it were a new lesson taught by modern schools of thought only. In fact the Āryans were in advance of the people of modern times in matter of social service and it might be even said that they were more generous and liberal in showing hospitality to guests and in doing charitable and benevolent deeds than the modern-day reformers some of whom were actuated more with a spirit of self aggrandisement and pure selfishness rather than with ideas of real social service. The so called present day reformers being imbued with ideas of western culture are intent on destroying the ancient culture and civilisation of the Āryans including the institution of caste and other sacred rites and customs practised traditionally by the Hindus. With this end in view they are preaching false doctrines

and even carrying on propaganda work against caste although they do not possess even the elementary knowledge of the doctrines of the sacred laws and traditions of the Āryans. It is no doubt true that owing to a neglect of the study of the Dharma Śāstras and want of knowledge of the philosophical basis of the institution of caste, the present day castes and subcastes have multiplied to over three thousand in number having lost their original unity and co-ordination in the being of the Absolute, they are now wrongly taken as separate groups and water-tight compartments having no connection with one another. But from this, one cannot condemn the whole institution of caste as such, as it is one of the oldest institutions of the Āryans which has survived till to-day notwithstanding great obstacles and has a special efficacy of bringing about the social, economical and national development of a country. A highly talented and experienced Civilian Sir George Birdwood pays a glowing tribute to the institution of caste in the following form. Thus he says "The caste system of the code of Manu is the charter of the very essence of India, the breaking of which would reduce India to deadlier anarchy than that of a thousand years brought to an end by our great Victory of Plassey."

Sat-Sudras and Asat-Sudras.

The last caste was that of Sudras (servant class) who again were of two kinds viz *Sat-Sudras* (of pure origin and good habits) and *Asat-Sudras* (of impure origin and bad habits). The *Sat-Sudras* were born of parents of the same caste who lived generally on service of the three higher castes which was the peculiar profession allowed to them. But in case they were unable to find such service they were allowed to carry on trade, agriculture, handicrafts, and other mechanical occupations and arts such as carving, sculpture, painting and so forth. The *Asat-Sudras* on the other hand were born of mixed marriages between persons belonging to different castes. They were inferior to *Sat-Sudras* who were born of marriages between persons of the same caste. A Hindu was enjoined to marry within his own caste by the sacred laws. However in olden times before the sacred laws were finally arranged and shaped into proper form, the conquering Āryans who wanted to multiply and settle into India contracted marriages with persons outside their own castes and sometimes even with persons belonging to the castes of the ud-

Āryan aborigine natives of India and they begot offspring called *Sankaras*. Such inter-marriages between persons belonging to different castes were of 2 kinds viz, *Anuloma* and *Pratiloma*.

Mixed marriages *Anuloma* and *Pratiloma*

If a male of a higher caste married with a female belonging to a lower caste the marriage was *Anuloma*, while if a female of a higher caste married with a male of a lower caste, the marriage was called *Pratiloma*. The offspring of such hybrid or mixed marriages were called *Varna Sankaras* who were again of 2 kinds viz., *Anuloma Sankaras* and *Pratiloma Sankaras*.

Low and backward classes or *Antyajas*

Of the 2 classes of *Sankaras* or hybrid offspring, *Anuloma sankaras* who embraced certain low professions formed backward castes called (*Antyajas*) who had a place within the fold of Hindu Community. Seven castes were stamped as low and backward castes (*Antyajas*) and they were treated as not worthy of free intercourse with the Āryans. These included washerman, cobbler, actor, basket-maker, fisherman, flesh-seller, and hunter. They were however not so degraded as *chāndālas* (Untouchables) as to require bath for purification from defilement by touch with them.

***Chandālas* (Untouchables)**

But *Pratiloma Sankaras* were considered sinful and as base born of whom one variety in particular known as *Chāndāla* was the basest being born of the union of a Sūdra male with a Brāhman female. The *Chāndālas* were of several kinds viz, those by birth and those by bad and sinful conduct. The *Chāndālas* formed a separate class by themselves. They were untouchable and beyond the pale of caste. The existence of the class of *Chāndālas* (untouchables) is traced so far back as the *Vajasaneyi Samhita* or the white *Yajur Veda*. Several *Jātakas* in the Buddhist literature, distinctly allude to a separate residence of the *Chāndālas* in secluded places far away from the habitations of the Āryans and they were also described as unworthy of all intercourse with the high born Āryans on account of their degraded modes of life. The opinion therefore expressed by some scholars belonging to the school of reformers to the effect that the rule of untouchability had no sanction in the Vedas or ancient literature and that it was

a modern innovation is clearly unsustainable. The class of Chūndālas or untouchables included in its fold *Pukkās* and *Scapichas* (eaters of dog's flesh) as described in the Smritis and the present day *Doms*, *Bhangis* (carriers of night soil and filth) *Dheids* (Sweepers) and *Chamtras* (carrying on the profession of preparing hides from dead animals etc.). The Chūndālas could never be raised to the status of Āryans all at once in this life until all their sins were purged off by taking repeated births in succeeding generations and they were fitted to attain the elevated position of *Sat-Sūtras* by leading a pure and moral life.

Fundamental difference between backward classes and untouchables

A great confusion seems to prevail at present in the minds of several persons in the discrimination of backward classes and untouchables and these two classes are often interchanged by them. Although the untouchables are backward classes, the backward classes are not necessarily all untouchables like Chūndālas with whom the Āryans had no social intercourse of any kind. The statements made by the reformers from the platform as well as the press to the effect that there are about 4 crores of people in the Hindu community of India who are all untouchables and who would be lost to the Hindus unless they were given all the rights, religious or secular, as are enjoyed by the caste Hindus are not correct as would appear on an examination of the statistical figures in the last census return of 1931. These figures show the total number of persons not following the Brahminical religion including the untouchables as amounting to about 1½ crores only. They also contain certain aboriginal and other tribes which do not follow the Hindu religion. Therefore the total number of untouchables in the Hindu community would hardly amount to even a crore of persons. While persons belonging to the caste of Chūndālas were untouchable and were considered unworthy of all social intercourse persons belonging to the backward castes (*Antyajas*) were not necessarily so in all respects so as to require an immediate bath for purification as in the case of untouchables but social intercourse with some of them was prohibited on account of the low professions carried on by them and their impure and unclean modes of life.

Uplift of backward classes and elevation of their social status.

Although in Vedic times in the beginning, the conquering Āryans who penetrated into India subjugated the aboriginal natives of India called *Dasyus* and *Dāsas* and even reduced them to slavery, yet in course of time they imparted to them higher ideas of civilisation and culture and better modes and habits of life and elevated their social status. "After some generations the conquered natives began to be called *Sūdras* and they gained a recognised position in society being worthy of being prayed for their welfare by a Brāhman sage and were almost bracketted together with the *Vaisyas*." However certain restrictions were placed against their participating in the religious sacrifices and rites performed by the high caste Hindus. But even as regards *Sūdras* and persons of low castes, exceptions were made in the case of a few persons who were elevated to the status of *Sat-Sūdras* due to their pure habits and special rights were accorded to them by way of exception. Thus *Kukshivān* and *Kavasha Ailusha* who were begotten by certain sages on maid servants were respected as Rishis on account of the superior knowledge possessed by them. Similarly *Vidur* who was the son of a maid servant and *Dharma Vyādha* who was a flesh vendor and belonged to a low caste were also highly respected by the Āryans on account of the pious and moral life led by them. Further as regards certain Āryans who had been made outcasts for leading a sinful and degraded life or were converted to other faiths and religions, a special ceremony called *Vrātya Stoma* was laid down to purify them by a prescribed penance after undergoing which the outcast was entitled to enjoy all the social and religious rights possessed by the Āryans. This was *Shuddhi* or the special mode of purification which was prescribed in the Scriptures and the Hindu Shāstras. It will be thus seen that the Āryans were not lagging behind in ameliorating the social condition of the backward classes but too much mixing with these classes led to the introduction of several evil practices and customs in the Hindu society. Thus the Āryans adopted certain evil customs and practices prevalent in certain communities of the aboriginals such as worship of phallus, serpent, birds, monkey, tree and so on. The practice in an extreme form of the rule of untouchability as observed in Southern India seems to have been

copied from the Pre-Dravidians. The law-givers therefore with a view to preserve the racial purity and high culture of the Aryans framed stringent rules and laws to stop the evil practices which had crept in Hindu society. The rule was also laid down by the law-givers insisting on marriage within one's own caste. Niyoga or the practice of begetting offspring by a person on the wife of another who had no issue was also censured by Manu and other law-givers as a beastly act. Special rules and restrictions were also made by the law-givers in matters relating to bath, food, drink, touch, purification, penance and so on, which were put on a truly scientific and philosophical basis but which were more rational than those observed by some of Pre-Dravidian aboriginal tribes of Un-Aryan origin in southern India among whom the rules of untouchability were most rigid and prevailed to a bewildering extent.

(17) Hindu Ethics

Ethics has always occupied an important place in Hindu religion and philosophy and it was never divorced from religion. No true religion could ever exist without Virtue. In fact morality had been a part and parcel of the Hindu religion from the very earliest times. Thus in the Vedas, the Brāhmanas and the Upanishads we find occasional praises on virtues such as gift, love, truth, righteousness, abstinence from injury (*Ahimsā*), purity, austerities, and so on, and exhortations to lead a life of virtue and good conduct. Thus it was said in the Upanishads: Truth alone conquers, not falsehood. Virtues were praised and Vices were condemned. The supreme purpose of life however according to the Upanishads was not Ethics but realisation of the true self (*Ātman*) by means of knowledge and devotion. Ethics was a means only to the supreme end of self-realisation which could not be achieved unless one had purged off all selfish impulses and purified his mind by leading a moral and well-disciplined life. The Bhagwad Gītā also teaches the same lesson and enjoins a man to lead a life of Virtue coupled with devotion to God by doing disinterested work of service, piety, and benevolence without any eye to fruit. However although the Gītā recognises the value of ethics for purification and discipline and enumerates long lists of virtues and vices for one's guidance, yet according to the Gītā, self-realisation was the supreme purpose of

Ethics which was a means only to the said end and not an end in itself. The Gītā was not merely a book of ethics as understood by certain scholars, but it was a philosophical and religious treatise of great value which taught lessons of highest truth and religion. However the position was altered in the times of the 2 Epics, the Rāmāyana and the Māhābhārata, wherein great emphasis was laid on the value of ethics and moral virtues. The Rāmāyana is a record of the highest moral ideas and it depicts virtues of an ideal king, an ideal husband, an ideal wife, an ideal son, and an ideal brother. The Māhābhārata is a didactic work which is full of long dissertations and didactic sermons with mythological anecdotes and praises on good conduct and moral virtues such as truth, abstention from injury (*Ahimsā*), honesty, righteousness and so on. It preached that "the path of virtue was a stepping stone to religion and philosophy." In an important passage in the Māhābhārata, Yudhisthira makes the following observations on virtue: "I follow *Dharma* (religion or virtue) not because I see any immediate profit from it but from a conviction that virtue is to be followed for its own sake. The vicious man may prosper for a time but virtue's reward is sure to come though now invisible." Similarly in the Dharma Shāstras, we find the highest encomium paid to virtue. The revered sage Manu teaches that *Dharma* (Virtue) is divine law which is laid down for the guidance of man. Thus he says: "Alone man is born, alone he dies, alone he reaps the fruit of good and evil done by him. Righteousness alone follows the soul as a companion after one's death here. Righteousness being violated destroys, righteousness being preserved preserves. Therefore righteousness must not be violated lest violated righteousness destroy us. The only friend that follows a man even after death is righteousness, for every thing else is lost at the same time when the body perishes." Far above the performance of sacrifices and other rites and rituals, was esteemed the possession of virtuous and good conduct which led one to Heaven. It was laid down by the law-givers that even a Sūdra keeping himself free from every vice, if he imitates the behaviour of the virtuous, gains exaltation in this world and even enjoys the celestial region by following his own religion. Thus a life of virtue was laid down in the Dharma Shāstras as the supreme religion for all, irrespective of considerations of caste, creed, sect or community.

Theistic basis of Ethics of the Dharma Shāstras and restraining influence of the latter

The Ethics of the Dharma Shāstras was put on a theistic basis and any transgression of the moral laws therein was considered a religious offence against God and a sin which always entailed punishments which were meted out to the delinquent by God as the dispenser of Divine Justice. The authors of the Dharma Shāstras pointed out that upon a strict observance of virtue depended all worldly prosperity and the final attitude of emancipation which was the summum bonum of human life. The offender who committed sin was made to take fresh cycles of births in different bodies of persons of low castes as Chandālas and even animals as vulture, ass, wolf, serpent and so on as a punishment for the sins committed by him, until he had completely purged off all his sins by leading a moral and religious life. The doctrine of transmigration of souls was a fundamental part of the Dharma Shāstras which was accepted by all religiously minded Hindus as an axiomatic truth. It afforded a great solace to thousands of Hindus in their several misfortunes and afflictions of life. Even untouchables and the backward classes never murmured or complained against the justice of God in creating them in low existences as they had implicit faith in the Divine law according to which they were created by God in low conditions of life as a punishment only for some sins committed by them in their past lives and that no injustice was done by God at any time. He was always just and merciful. The new path of devotion as taught in the Bhagavad Gita was open to all including women and even the worst sinners, who derived great consolation in their worldly miseries and afflictions of life by having a sole refuge in God as their saviour and an implicit faith in His wise sense of justice and His power of conferring Grace on all who approached him with love and humble devotion which could purge off all their sins. Thus led to a moral regeneration and an uplift of the devotee who scrupulously carried out the duties as laid down in the sacred laws, the Scriptures and Shāstras in a disinterested manner and with thoughtful devotion and service to God. The paramount lesson of paying utmost respect to established authority whether of father, mother, elders, teacher or king was implanted in the mind of every Hindu from his

very birth by the Dharma Shāstras which were capable of exercising a very healthy and restraining influence on society by combating the present day disruptive forces leading to communism, Bolshevism, and even anarchy. The theory of extreme individualism giving rise to a false sense of an unrestrained license and egotism in the pious name of liberty, fraternity and equality has no place in the Hindu Dharma Shāstras which have proclaimed in loud terms that every man shall fulfil the duty (*Dharma*) imposed on him, without clamouring for rights. Rights and duties are always correlative. One man's duty always corresponds with the right of another. If all men carried out the duties laid down for them, they would soon realise that they are already enjoying the rights for which they were clamouring all along and all social discords and disputes that are found prevailing at present between persons and persons and classes and classes as in the case of capitalist and labourer, landlord and tenant, master and servant, father and son, and ruler and ruled would disappear and complete peace, happiness, and order would be restored everywhere in society as a universal fellowship and brotherhood under the kingdom of God.

(18) Catholicity of the Hindu Dharma Shāstras and adaptation of law to changed circumstances.

It is believed by some that the sacred laws in the Dharma Shāstras as observed by the Hindus traditionally are rigid and inflexible and they are not capable of being changed at any time. But this belief would be found to be incorrect on an examination of the Dharma Shāstras themselves. In fact different sets of duties were prescribed in the law books for different ages. Thus in the Satya age, the chief virtue was austerity (Tapa), in the Tretā, knowledge (Jñāna), in the Dvāpara, sacrifice (Yajna), and in the Kali age, liberality (Dāna) alone was the chief virtue. The sage Pārāśara has further observed that "the law-givers have made a gradation in the practice of expiatory penances according to the capacity of the penitent in each age but those laid down by the holy Pāraśara should be observed in the Kali age. That the rules of piety etc., are also different in the succeeding ages of Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali according to the exigencies of each age."

Similarly different law books are prescribed for the different ages viz., that of Manu for Satya age, that of Gotama for Tretā, that of Śankha and Lakṣha for Dvāpara and that of the sage Pārāśara for the Kali age. This clearly shows that the Code of Manu which was meant for the Satya age was not suitable in all respects to the present age of Kali on account of the inherent weakness of man in this age and the changed circumstances therein. The omniscient law-givers have therefore left a wide scope for changes in the practical spheres of life according to the needs of the times, in matters of food, drink, touch, cleanliness, purification, penances and so on without any detriment however to the fundamental principles of the Sāṅkhya religion. Thus the sage Pārāśara whose Smṛiti has special application to the present age of Kali has made a considerable relaxation in the rigour of rules in matters of food, drink, touch, purity, penances and so on for the Kali age and for distressed times. Mr. Harrell in his 'Āryan rule in India' makes the following observations in this connection: "In India religion is hardly a dogma but a working hypothesis of human conduct adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life." It is therefore rightly observed by Śrī Rādhākṛṣṇa that "It is the intimate relation between the truth of philosophy and daily life of people that makes religion always alive and real." Hindu religion was never rigid at any time as wrongly understood by some but it had a wonderful capacity of adjusting itself to the changed circumstances. Thus for example although it was the usual practice in olden times to honour a guest visiting the house of a householder with a repast of flesh at a special ceremony called Madhuparka yet the said practice has died away. It is observed by the sage Yajñavalkya that a new rule prohibiting flesh eating although it was once believed as conducive to religious merit is now definitely established which is binding on all to which a gloss is added in the Mitakṣhara that no one should slaughter animals at Madhuparka as the practice has totally fallen into disrepute. Thus Hindu law secular as well as religious is a growing law and necessary changes are always made therein according to the exigencies of times and changed circumstances provided however they did not offend against any express commandments and precepts of the Śāstras and were not repugnant to the

fundamental doctrines of the Hindu religion. It is this element of catholicity and adaptability of law to changed circumstances that has kept up and preserved the Hindu religion, since ages past. It is however unfortunate that of late we see all around signs of a growing tendency on the part of certain schools of reformer to interfere with the freedom of conscience and liberty of faith of the Hindus in religious matters by forcing social reforms on the Hindu community even against their wish by medium of Legislation in religious or socio-religious matters such as Divorce, Untouchability-removal and so on even though the proposed reforms may be directly opposed to the Shāstras. It is submitted that it is not competent to the present day heterogeneous Legislatures composed as they are of persons belonging to different castes, creeds and religions to pass any laws on any religious or socio-religious questions affecting the peoples of India. According to the Hindu orthodox view it is only for the synod of Pandits and scholars well versed in the sacred lore to pronounce an authoritative opinion as to whether a particular question is religious or socio-religious, and whether the proposed changes in the law are formal only or are substantive, and if they are formal, whether they are warranted by the Hindu Shāstras. It is highly desirable in the interest of peace and good Government that Government should intervene in such matters and prevent an abuse of the power of the Legislature to legislate in such matters by declaring a definite policy, as it did recently in the case of the Temple Entry Bill, which as a result had to be withdrawn by the sponsor of the Bill.

It is a happy augury of the times that the League of Nations that met at Geneva, in which India was also represented, passed a resolution recording the need of recognising the fundamental rights of all minor communities including the right of freedom of conscience and liberty of action in religious matters and it is hoped that the said resolution would be shortly adopted by the Government of India in the interest of the future peace of the peoples of India.

BOOK I

VEDIC PERIOD

CHAPTER II

SAMHITAS & BRAHMANAS.

I. Introductory

(1) General

The Vedas are the fountain-head of Hindu authority to all the rest of Hindu literature. They are the sole source of the growth of the Hindu mind and of the cultivated disciplines in the sciences and in the arts. As Mr. A. C. S. Lewis writes, "The Vedas are the fountain-head of Hindu philosophy in which Manu has taken up a special thread and has spun from which each thread was spun for his own purpose." The Vedas are the most sacred of all Hindu literature of the Hindus because they are the highest authority. The Vedas contain the divine wisdom and knowledge of things directly revealed to the Hindu sages of long ago put by intuition and are called *Śruti* as they are directly heard or experienced by intuition. The Vedas are therefore called *Apurāṇa* as they are not composed by any human being and therefore free from all subjective element they are deemed infallible and containing absolute truths. Prof. Maxmüller has stated the high position of the Vedas as will appear from the following remarks in his *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*— "In the history of the world the Veda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language fills. It carries us back to times of which we have no records anywhere and gives us the very words of generation of men of whom otherwise we could form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjectures and inferences. As long as man continues to take an interest in the history of his race, and as long as we collect in libraries and museums the relics of former ages, the first place in that long row of books which contains the records of the Aryan branch of mankind belongs for ever to the Rig Veda the most ancient of books in the library of mankind which is more ancient than the *Zend Avesta* and *Homer*. Professor Macdonald also speaks of the Vedas in very high and

glowing terms as appears from his observations —“This lyrical poetry far older than the literary monuments of any other branch of the Indo-European family is already distinguished by refinement and beauty of thought, as well as skill in the handling of language and meter.”

(2) The age of the Vedas.

As regards the age of the Vedas, European scholars and critics like Professors Maxmuller, Macdonald and others have stated that the Rig Veda Samhita which is the oldest of all the four Vedas in its present form must have been composed between 1500 to 1000 B C. But this view is not accepted by Indian Scholars as Messrs Tilak, Vaidya, Dixit and others who have proved by internal evidence and arguments based on Astronomical and Mathematical proofs which are unassailable, that the later Rig-Vedic hymns must have been composed between 4000 and 3000 B C. while the older hymns are traced so far back as 6000 B C when the Indo-Aryans had not separated from their Indo-Iranian Brethren and had not come to India. The great German research scholar Prof Jacobi agrees with the last view and he thinks that the Vedic period goes back to 4000 B. C., “a theory based on astronomical calculations connected with a change in the beginning of the seasons which he thinks has taken place since the time of the Rig Ved period.” Mr. Vaidya divides the history of Sanskrit literature into three periods viz (1) The Vedic and post Vedic period (c. 4500 B. C. to 800 B. C) called shruti period, (2) the classical period (c. 800 B. C. to 800 A. D) and (3) the modern period (c. 800 A. D. to 1500 A. D.) which is also called the Bhashya period or the period of commentators.

(3) The Field of Vedic Subjects.

The Vedas consist of Samhitas which constitute the earliest religious poetry and Brahmanas which are in prose and which include the Upanishads or Vedanta as the closing portion. The Brahmanas range in date between 3100 B. C. and 800 B. C. The Samhitas, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads are called Vedas or Shrutis. They constitute the Revealed Scriptures of the Hindus and are of divine authority. They are the most ancient and sacred literature which contains the oldest germs of Indian philosophy.

(a) The four Vedas

The Vedas are four in number viz. the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda which is subdivided into Black and white—Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. Of the four Vedas, Rig Veda is the oldest. It consists of Hymns or hymns in the form of poetry which are either 'prayer' to Gods or which accompanied sacrifices for religious purpose. They also contain various other topics such as praise of deities, truth speaking, social customs, common relation to marriage and deaths and fights between the Aryas and the Dravidas. The Yajurveda is divided into two containing the ritualistic and prayer or magical uses of Yajus or formula and directions for carrying out the sacrifices. The Samaveda contains hymns which were usually sung. The black or hymns of the Rig Veda which were recited or sung were called Samaveda or good verses. These Samaveda were sung at the sacrifices or at the pressing of the Samas. Jones Prof. Max Müller believes that the Samaveda is older than the Yajurveda, Black and white. But Professor Maximüller is of opinion that all the three Vedas viz. Rig Veda, Yajurveda and the Sama Veda have been compiled at the same time probably when the Shatapatha Brahmana was composed by the sage Yajñavalkya about 1000 B.C. The three Vedas alone were recognised at first. They were called Traya Vedas in the Shatapatha Brahmana. The fourth Veda known as the Atharva Veda was not recognised as Veda at all in the beginning as it consisted mostly of magic spells, sorcery and incantations which were used by the un-Aryans and the lower classes to achieve worldly good as wealth, riches, children, health, freedom from diseases etc. The magicians of the Indo-Iranian were also known as adepts in the art of magic and sorcery. The Atharvaveda was recognised later on when hymns relating to sacrifices seem to have been added to it to gain recognition from the orthodox. Professor Bloomfield however is of opinion that the Atharvaveda contains some hymns which are as old as those of the Rig Veda.

It may be stated generally that the system of sacrifices was already in vogue with the Aryans before the Rig Veda was compiled in the form in which it is found at present. But the

rituals of the sacrifices then were simple and not so complicated and elaborate as in later times. Besides some hymns of the Rig Veda contain simple prayers and worship of gods without admixture of the sacrificial rites. Ashvalayana quotes passages from the Rig Veda to show that Gods do not despise those simple offerings, Nay mere prayers will secure their favour and hymns of praise are as good as the sacrificial offerings of bulls and animals. He quotes Rig Veda 8-19-5, 6 and 8-24-20. In later times however and particularly in the time of the Yajur Veda the formalism and rigour of the sacrifices increased and they became more bloody by the sacrifice of hundreds of animals offered as oblations in the holy fire.

(b) Brahmanas.

Each Veda has got its own separate Samhita or compilation of Mantras and metrical songs in the form of a prayer book as also Brahmanas containing a critical exposition of the rituals relating to sacrifices and other miscellaneous subjects such as grammar, etymology, astronomy, logic, meter, philosophy etc. Thus the Rig Veda has got attached to it two Brahmanas known as the Antareya and the Kaushitaki Brahmanas, while the white Yajur Veda has the Shatapatha Brahmana which is the most important of all the Brahmanas. The Samveda has got 3 Brahmanas known as the Panchavimsa, Jaiminiya and the Chhandogya Brahman, while the Atharvaveda has got the Gopatha Brahmana.

(c) Angas

Each Veda has several shakhas or branches and chanakas or schools where knowledge of the Veda was orally imparted by teachers to pupils by the traditional method without any break in continuity. The different Vedic schools had their own readers or text books called Pratishakhyas. The knowledge of the Vedas would be incomplete without a knowledge of the Angas and Upangas (i.e. appendages of the Vedas) and the Upavedas which are also treated as part of the Vedic literature. The Angas are six in number viz. (1) Shiksha which means the art of committing to memory and studying the Samhitas (2) Kalpas which contain rules relating to the performance of Vedic sacrifices and explanations of

the rituals and duties contained in the Brahmanas. They were framed by sages in the form of Sūtras called the Śrauta Sūtras. There were also two other kinds of Sūtras called the Grhya Sūtras dealing with the rules of domestic ceremonies such as the initiation ceremony of a boy and sacred thread (Yajña) or marriage ceremonies etc. and the Dharmya Sūtras dealing with rules of conduct, social order and law. (7) Aṅkaraṇa or grammar composed by Panini which is the oldest Vedic grammar. (8) Nūktā or etymology composed by Yāky. (9) Chāndas or meter and rules of the metrical utterances of the Vedas composed by Pingal, Naga and (10) Vyākaraṇa dealing with the subject of a tree named composed by Gaṇḍa Arjuna. A tree named was treated as a part of the Vedas as the Priests were particular about the exact time of performance of the sacrifices.

(d) Upaniṣads

The Upaniṣads were four viz. (1) Nārada or Anvikṣi dealing with logic composed by Gotama. (2) Muṇḍakā dealing with rules of interpretation of the Vedic Brahmanas in relation to the Vedic rites and rituals composed by Jaimini. (3) Dharmya Śāstras dealing with law and rules of conduct and social order such as those of Manu, Yājñavalkya, Nārada and others and (4) Purāṇas which are 18 in number. They contain discussion of various subjects such as theories of creation, dogmas of theologues, prayers of various Gods and some philosophical speculations explained in a homely and interesting manner by the aid of legends and fables specially for the benefit of women and Sudras and the laity who were not initiated in the sacred lore. The Upaniṣads did not really form part of the Vedas or Śruti but they came under the category of Smṛti which were composed subsequently by learned authors from memory and recollections of Vedas or Śruti, some of which were lost or forgotten in course of time.

(e) Upavedas

The Upavedas were also four in number viz., (1) Ayurveda or medicine composed by Charaka. This belongs to the Rig Veda. (2) Dhanurveda or archery composed by Rishi Viśhwamitra. This belongs to the Yajurveda. (3) Gundharva Veda or the science of

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(e) Upavedas

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music, dancing, drama etc composed by Bharata. This forms part of the Samaveda and (4) Artha Veda or the science of arts including sculpture, carving etc which were about 64 in number. This forms part of the Atharva Veda

It will appear from the above that the Vedic religion was not confined to certain dogmas of theology for the benefit of a certain class of persons only but it was very comprehensive in nature and embraced various topics and subjects which covered even those relating to the ordinary affairs of daily life and were of practical importance to persons of all classes including the laity. Even a cursory perusal of the vast Vedic literature will convince any one that the people of the Vedic age had attained a very high stage of civilisation and culture and had an intimate knowledge of various subjects of general public importance. It is therefore evidently wrong to style and characterise their utterances as those of mere children in infancy as some Western critics have done. It may be stated in general that the Vedic literature and religion consists of two strata of thought which were meant for two classes of persons viz (1) the upper classes which included the class of Brahmins or the priestly caste, the Kshatriyas or the warrior caste, and the Vaishyas or the trading caste who formed the third caste. They were called the Trivarnikas or the three higher castes who were initiated in the sacred lore and the fire cult as taught in the Brahmanas and (2) the middle classes which included the uninitiated Vaishyas who lived on agriculture and trade and were engaged in other occupations prescribed for them and the lower classes or the Sudra caste who lived on service to the three higher castes.

The fire cult and the sacred lore were meant for the three higher castes. The Brahmanas prescribed certain formulas and procedure for the sacrificial rituals and dogmas of theology which involved high technicalities and were too elaborate and expensive for the average middle class persons for whom there was the Puranic religion which was based on Smritis and traditions. It was not so elaborate and expensive as the Saiva Religion.

II Vedic karmas or actions

(1) Sacrifice as Dharma or Religious duty

I have already mentioned above that the two main divisions of the Vedas were the Mantras and the Brahmanas. The Mantras mostly consist of prayers offered to various deities such as Indra, Agni, Surya, Varuna, Rudra, Vishnu and others. The Brahmanas consist of expositions of the Procedure about the performance and technique of the fire sacrifice which was considered the highest duty of every Aryan. It may be stated that the idea of sacrifice as entertained by the Aryans was distinguished from that seen in other religions such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Islam, by the fact that the Aryan sacrifice was always performed in the holy fire (Agni) which was a Vedic deity in which various animals, butter, grains and other articles were offered as oblations to different deities. This was accompanied by utterances of the holy Mantras and formulas contained in the Vedas to secure an eternal abode in the heaven as fruit of the said sacrifices by the medium of Apurva or unseen super-sensuous religious merit which always accompanied the soul of the person performing the sacrifices on his death. It was the highest duty of every Aryan to perform sacrifices with all the formalities as laid down by imperative texts contained in the Brahmanas and for which various rules were prescribed. Suffice it to say for the present that the said rules all related to actions sacrificial, social or moral. The performance of sacrifices however was enjoined as indispensable to secure Swarga or a celestial abode which was considered the summum bonum of life by the Vedic people.

The Brahmanas generally treat of the following four subjects viz. (1) Vidhi or commandments which enjoined the performance of certain obligatory actions as sacrifices the fruit of which was acquisition of the heaven. (2) Artha Vedas or explanatory statements or statements in eulogy of the obligatory actions. (3) Nishedhas or prohibitory statements forbidding sinful actions which lead to hell, and (4) Miscellaneous subjects. Of the above four subjects the first and the third relate to sacrifices and ethics which constitute the principal aim of a man's life, while the second relates to a bare statement of facts, principles or truths as detached from actions which were treated as subsidiary to actions.

(2) Rules relating to the social order of castes and stages of life.

Institution of castes (Varnas).

We have seen above that the main purpose of the Brahmanas was to teach the performance of sacrifices which consisted mostly of animal sacrifices as the highest Dharma or religious duty which was the instrumental cause of a heavenly abode. But there were also other duties laid down in the Vedas for the welfare and good of individuals and society viz social duties and duties relating to conduct. In the Brahmanas we find a distinct advance and development of the idea of society, which for the first time appears in the famous Purusha Sukta in the last Mandala of the Rig Veda.¹

In the Purusha Sukta the gods are the agents of the act of creation, while the material out of which the world is made is the body of the primeval person called Virat Purusha. The act of creation is treated as a sacrifice in which the evolved person is the victim whose several parts when cut up and offered as oblations in the holy fire became portions of the universe. In verse 12, it is laid down that the mouth of the victim became the Brahmana or the priestly caste, His two arms became the Kshatriya or the warrior caste, his two thighs the Vaishyas or the mercantile caste; while his two feet generated the Sudra or the servant class as the fourth caste. This was the beginning of the caste system of India which consisted at first only of four castes having distinct duties as learning, fight in the battle, trade and service, corresponding to the limbs of the evolved person namely the head, the two arms, the two thighs and the two feet respectively which were sacrificed in the fire. The above hymn is really pantheistic in strain teaching the doctrine of the synthetic unity of the world including the four castes but the idea of unity was lost sight of in course of time and the castes became exclusive and even apathetic towards one another and in course of time the four main castes became divided and sub-divided into innumerable castes and sub-castes which had no synthetic cohesion.

From the Zend Avesta we find that the Indo-Iranians had also three castes, called Atharvas, Rathastas and Vastryas or Shuyans corresponding to the three castes Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas of the Indo-Aryans Dr Haug is of opinion that there was already a division of the four castes in Vedic times thus differing from Prof Roth, Dr Moor and Mr Dutt who believe that the division of the four castes did not exist in Vedic times but was formed subsequently

Stages of life (Ashramas)

Similar to the institution of castes there is another institution known as the Ashramas which also developed in the time of the Brahmins along with the former The Ashramas are four in number viz (1) The Brahmacharya or the stage of studentship which enjoins on the student the study of the Vedas and a life of strict Brahmacharya or celibacy and discipline as also the observance of certain other rules (2) the Grihasthashramam or the stage of a house-holder or a married man which enjoins the observance of certain duties as the begetting of a son, the performance of five daily sacrifices, entertaining a guest, maintaining the ascetic etc. (3) The Vanas-Prastha Ashrama or the stage of an ascetic which enjoins compulsory retirement from the worldly life and embracing the life of an ascetic preparatory to renunciation accompanied with all sorts of austerities and penances and (4) lastly the stage of an ascetic which enjoins complete renunciation of the duties laid down for a family man and all obligatory actions

The above eightfold Dharma known as Varnashrama Dharma or the duties of the four stages of life is enjoined by the Vedic religion for the good of the individuals and society as a part and parcel of the whole social order equally as the performance of sacrifices The caste order is of divine institution as taught in the Purusha Sukta of Rig Veda Each man is born in that family whose place in society accords with his deeds in the previous life. The above duties relating to the social order are based on the Vedas and are treated at great length in the Dharma Sutras as an appendage to the Kalpa Sutras which form one of the six Angas of the Vedas as stated above They also form part of the Smritis or Dharma

Shastras which are treatises dealing with law, rules of conduct, social order etc. as those of mauu, Yajnavalkya, Narada, Parashara and others

(3) Rules of Good Conduct and ethics.

Lastly we find in the Vedas and the Brahmanas a casual discussion on ethics and rules of good conduct. One is enjoined to lead a moral life and show good conduct if he wants to secure heaven after death. If he leads a wicked and sinful life he has to undergo suffering in hell and after undergoing punishment there he is reborn on the earth being invested with a suitable body to further suffer the consequences of his past misdeeds. Rules of good conduct including the customary practices and observances are laid down in the Vedas and Smritis. The Smritis are based on the Vedas. They also include rules for purity and those regulating baths, diet, penances etc. Good conduct is a necessary qualification to the successful performance of the holy sacrifices as enjoined by the Veds and Brahmanas and is of instrumental value subserving the means of procuring heaven as the highest fruit of sacrifices after death. Rule of good conduct is transcendental law according to Manu¹

(4) Kamya Yajnas or sacrifices with desire.

We have seen above that the Vedic religion was primarily a religion of Dharma or righteousness and duty. It enjoined the performance of sacrifices and the observance of rules relating to the social order and good conduct as the duty of every man. Obligatory sacrifices were called Vilrita Yajnas. More attention was however paid to the performance of such sacrifices rather than their fruit. As distinguished from the above there were certain other kinds of sacrifices which were called Kamya Yajnas or sacrifices done with a desire for rewards. Several sacrifices with desire for rewards are mentioned in the Brahmanas as performable only by persons having desires for special rewards. Thus if a king wanted to have universal sovereignty he had to perform the Rajasuya Yajna. Similarly if a person desired to have sons, riches or sovereignty he performed an Ashvamedha Sacrifice. These sacrifices were Kamya Sacrifices as performed with a desire for rewards. It may be mentioned here that the fruit acquired by the performance of sacrifices with desire was of less duration than

that by the performance of the obligatory sacrifices which were enjoined by the Vedas. The theory of sacrifices was elaborated to such an extent in the Yajurveda and the Brahmanas that hundreds and thousands of animals were sacrificed, in the altar of the holy fire. It was believed that the potency of sacrifices was so great that a man could command the services of the vedic gods as the fruit of performing sacrifices in the prescribed manner. He could thereby also acquire even the position of a god after death. Thus if a man performed 100 Ashvamedha or horse sacrifices he could acquire the suzerainty of Indra as Lord of the other gods. A feeling of revolt however soon arose against animal sacrifices in course of time on the establishment of two new religions viz. Buddhism and Jainism which laid particular stress on Ahimsa or abstention of injury and tenderness or love to animals.

III Theology of the Vedic Deities

(1) Major deities.

Having described above the value of the various kinds of sacrifices and duties as taught in the Vedas we shall now examine the theology of the Vedic Deities (deities) who also formed an Anga or part of the sacrifices. The Vedas are concerned mainly with the worship and prayer of different gods. The hymns of the Rig Veda are mainly invocations of the several gods which always accompanied the offering of oblations in the sacrificial fire. There is a great misconception on the part of Western scholars and critics as regards the nature of Vedic gods. They believe that the Vedic gods are personifications of the various powers of nature and natural phenomena. This however is quite a faulty notion as the Vedic gods are always conceived to have a life and a definite personality. They are also conceived as human in appearance having arms, mouth, tongue, ears etc and the other parts of the human body. The Vedic deities were probably conceived as the presiding deities of certain natural phenomena such as fire, wind, water, rain, lightning etc. The sun and the moon also were conceived as presided over by distinct deities which controlled their activities. These deities regulated the order of nature and they also held sway over all creatures. Prayers were and are still offered to them with the oblation offered in the

sacrificial fire which are carried to heaven by the god of fire. Some libation is also offered to them. Sometimes it is considered that the said deities themselves come here in their cars and sit on the Barhis or grass spread out for their reception and they partake of the offerings made to them. The fulfilment of the desires of the devotees such as long life, riches, children etc., is dependent on the favours of these deities. The Vedic deities are friends and protectors of the good and the righteous but they are enemies of the wicked and the sinful. No one can defy their immutable ordinances. Vedic people had great faith in the divine moral law that virtue will triumph at last.

(a) Varuna.

They offered most reverential prayers to god Varuna who was held in the highest esteem as a moral deity. He was also the presiding deity of Rta or harmony and order and was mainly praised as an upholder of the physical and moral order. He is called Dhrutavrata i.e. one whose vows are firm. The other gods follow his ordinances. The wind which resounds through the air is Varuna's breath. Varuna is the lord of light by day and by night. He is omniscient or all-knowing god. He knows the flight of the birds in the sky. He beholds all secret things that have been or shall be done. He is the moral governor of the universe. He binds the sinners with his pashas or fetters. The spies of Varuna are always moving about observing the two worlds. Varuna is also known for his mercy and he is always gracious and kind to the penitent who confess the sins committed by them. He releases men even from the sin committed by their fathers. All the hymns to Varuna contain a prayer for forgiveness of guilt of sins committed through ignorance or recklessness. He is the friend of the worshipper who communes with him. The later schools of the Vaishnava theists trace their doctrine of Bhakti or devotion to the Vedic god Varuna. The conception of Varuna is very old and goes back to the Indo-Iranian period. The conception of Ahuramazda or the wise spirit of the Avesta resembles that of the Indo-Aryans who also describe God Varuna as Asura which corresponds with the word Ahura in Zend Avesta. In course of time Varuna fell into the background being eclipsed by other deities and he was consigned to the ocean as its presiding deity.

(b) Sun

Next to Varuna as the deity of worship was the Sun god who was the most prominent object of worship in Vedic times. He was called Surya by which name he was worshipped. Another name for the same deity was Savitri who is very famous as the subject of the sacred hymn of the Gayatri which is chanted every morning by all pious Brahmins as a part of their sacred duty which consists in saying the Sandhya or morning prayer. Any omission in performance of this sacred duty was considered very sinful for the atonement of which one had to undergo the prescribed penance. The Gayatri Mantra of which the seer is sage Vishvamitra, when translated runs as follows —

“ We meditate on the adorable light of the divine Savitri who invites our intellect to activities ”¹ Of the other names of the sun I may mention here only Vishnu who though a minor deity in Vedic times assumed a very high position in later times and has been the supreme divinity of worship of the Vaishnava theists till to-day. He is well known for his three steps, with which he traverses the earth. Two of his steps are visible to men but the third which was the highest step is invisible to the human eye. The highest step is like an eye fixed in the heaven. It is his dear abode where pious men and gods rejoice. The three steps refer to the course of the sun and its passage through the three divisions of the world viz. earth, air and heaven. The above are some of the important duties of the celestial region.

(c) Indra.

We shall now consider the chief deities of the intermediate or atmospheric region. Of these the most important is Indra who was far more adored than any other deity in the whole of the Rig Veda, about one fourth of the hymns having been devoted exclusively to him. Indra the national God of the Vedic people possessed great martial spirit. He is the God of battle who helped the Aryans in their fight with the aboriginal tribes and the Dasyus who opposed the Aryans. He was therefore naturally their great favourite. He is also the God of rain

and thunderstorm. He is well known for his great powers of drinking soma libations which are therefore liberally offered to him by the devotee along with the other offerings in the sacrificial fire to propitiate him. He is more anthropomorphic than any other Vedic deity. He is well known by the epithet of Vritrahan which means destroyer of the demon Vritra. Indra's fight with Vritra is well known in the Rig Veda, in which he comes out triumphant having slain the demon with his Vajra or thunderbolt. He thus releases the cows which are the symbol for waters from the mountains which stand for clouds in which the demons lie. The cows may also mean the morning beams which are compared with cattle coming out of their dark stall. Indra is known for his physical valour and rule over the physical world. He is a stern fighter and he vanquishes his enemies by his superior strength. At the same time, he is sensual in some ways. He is intemperate and is known for his excesses in eating and drinking.

(d) Rudra

God Rudra occupies a very subordinate place in the Vedic pantheon being sung only in three entire hymns in the Rig Veda. He has a dazzling form and beautiful lips. His colour is brown. He wears golden ornaments. He holds a thunderbolt in his arms and is also armed with a bow and arrows which are swift. He is the God of storm and destruction, very fierce and strong. He is called a bull. It is however worthy of note that Rudra is not malignant like a demon. But he is a beneficent God known for his healing powers like a physician. He is also bountiful and is easily invoked by prayers. He readily fulfills the desires of his worshipper. He is also implored not to kill or injure in his anger. Though Rudra occupies a subordinate place in the Rig Veda, he slowly began to rise in supremacy until by the time of the Yajurveda his supremacy was undoubtedly recognised. The white Yajur Veda samhita has two whole chapters containing litanis devoted to his worship. They are known as the Shatarudriya prayers supplicating the God by several names by which he became known. The Shatarudriya litanies of the Yajurveda Samhita are even now chanted all over India by the orthodox Brahmins who are the devotees of Rudra-Shiva. In course

of time Rudra worship became the most popular form of worship in the whole of India. Rudra soon became identified with Shiva or beneficent God. He was also called Mahadeva or the Supreme God. He acquired undoubted supremacy over all other gods including even Vishnu, who was then his only rival.

(e) Agni.

Lastly we come to terrestrial gods who were worshipped by the Vedic people. Of these Gods, Agni and Soma were the most important. Next to Indra in importance comes Agni or fire god who is praised in about 203 hymns of the Rig Veda. His anthropomorphism is however only rudimentary. As fire cult was the creed of the Vedic people it is but natural that Agni should be very popular with them. In addition to his terrestrial origin by friction of two branches or kindling sticks, he has also a celestial origin. He is described as brought down from heaven by Maruts the Indian Prometheus. He takes the sacrificial offerings of men to the gods and brings the gods to the sacrifice. He is therefore called a messenger of gods and men and also a priest. Agni is further known for his great wisdom as knowing all the details of sacrifice and is called Jata Vedas i.e. one who knows all created beings. The ordinary sacrificial Agni who conveys the offerings to gods is called havayahana. There is another kind of Agni called the Kravyad which is distinguished from the above as a corpse devourer. It burns the dead body on the funeral pyre. The Vedic idea of Agni as a beneficent god may be traced so far back as the Indo-Iranian period when the forefathers of the Indo-Aryans lived with those of the Indo-Iranians who also worshipped fire as a personified being. The modern Parsis also worship with offerings of incense and other costly articles, the holy fire called Athra which is set up, and installed in special altars erected for the purpose in fire temples and maintained there permanently.

(f) Soma

We shall now consider the Vedic worship of the other terrestrial god Soma who also occupied a very important place in the pantheon of the Rig Veda, particularly in connection with the soma sacrifices which were performed with great celebrity and pomp. There are over 100 hymns specially devoted to Soma in the ninth

mandala of the Rig Veda, the rest amounting to about a dozen being scattered in the other mandalas. Soma was a peculiar plant known to the Vedic people and its Juice was valued most on account of its exhilarating effect. The Soma Juice was a sweet and intoxicating draught which was frequently called madhu. Soma has a heavenly car in which he rides like Indra. Soma is brought to the sacrificial ground in a special cart. It is pounded by stones and the juice is pressed through a Woolen Strainer when it flows into vats called Dionas. Soma pressed Juice as it passes through the filter is called pavamana which means flowing clear. Soma is specially offered to god Indra with water and milk. Soma is pressed three times a day viz, in the morning, the midday and the evening for the three daily prayers called Pratassavana, Maddhyandina Savana and Sayama savan. On account of its exhilarating powers, Soma is called Amrita or draught of immortality bestowing immortal life. All the gods drink Soma to gain immortality. It also confers immortality on men who therefore freely drank the Soma Juice. In fact the uppermost desire of the Vedic people was to secure celestial abode and eternal happiness in the heaven. Hence it is stated in the Rig Veda "Apama Somam Amrita Abhuma—we have drunk Soma and have become immortal"¹. The intoxicating effect of Soma stimulates god Indra in his fights with the enemies of the Aryans. Soma corresponds with the word Homa in the Avesta. It carries us back to the Indo-Iranian period when the Indo Aryans and the Iranian Aryans lived together having several religious beliefs and practices in common. In both Rig Veda and the Avesta, Soma draught was considered very valuable and highest praises are bestowed on him as a mighty king and god.

(2) Minor Deities.

Besides the higher gods mentioned above there are also a number of minor deities mentioned in the Rig Veda such as Mitra-Varuna (sun of day and night) and Dyava-Prithivi (sky and earth), the Rudras having divine powers, Maruts (winds) who are the sons of Rudra and attendants of Indra found in troops or ganas, twelve Adityas (sun gods) having Varuna as their chief, Vasus under the leadership of Indra and Vishvedevas who form a minor group. There are also found in the Rig Veda a few goddesses who

play a very minor part. They are Usas or dawn about whom there are some beautiful descriptions in the Rig Veda, Saraswati a holy river, Vāc or goddess of speech, Prithvi or goddess earth, Ratri i.e. slumbering night and Aranyani or goddesses of the forest. There are also some other goddesses named Indrani Varunani and Agneyi who are the wives of the great gods Indra Varuna and Agni respectively. Their active part however is insignificant.

(3) Aryan doctlon and the doctles of Dasas and Asuras

While dealing with the Vedic pantheon and the gods and divinities worshipped by the Vedic Aryans it may be mentioned that we find references being constantly made in the Vedic hymns to the fights between the Aryans and the Dasyus and Dasas. The latter were the aborigines of dark complexion who offered great resistance to the entry of the Aryans into India. They were sometimes described as Danvas or demons who fought hard with the Aryans. They were headed by several leaders and chiefs known as Vritra Vnla and Sambara. The Aryans under the leadership of Indra attacked the strongholds of the aborigines who were led by their above named chiefs and defeated them in regular battles. The fight between Indra as leader of the Aryans and Vritra as leader of the aborigines ultimately resulted in favour of the Aryans. It is described in glowing terms in the Rig Veda and the Brahmanas. Sometimes we find the enemies of the Aryans described in the older parts of the Rig Veda as Asuras. But they are distinguished as belonging to a higher and superior class from the dark-complexioned Dasyus or aborigines. It is probable that the Asuras refer to the Indo Iranians who worshipped God as Ahura Mazda. The latter corresponds with the Sanskrit word Asura which is sometimes used for god Varuna. Asura here means giver of life. But subsequently it came to mean devils. The Indo Aryans at one stage lived together with the Iranian Aryans with whom they had many beliefs and practices in common before the former separated from the latter probably due to some schism on account of differences in theological views. The Asuras should not therefore be confounded with Dasyus or Dasas who were the dark complexioned aborigines and were possibly the illiterate and uncultured Dravidians who occupied

India before the advent of the Aryas. The aborigines were therefore called Anaryans as distinguished from the Aryans who had a white complexion and were civilised and who knew ploughing and various other arts as carpentry, smithing, chariot-making, manufacture of arms of war etc. The Dasyus are sometimes called Anasas which means persons who could not utter civilised language. The Anaryan Dasyus did not worship the Devas or the bright gods of the Aryans as the sun, fire, Varuna and Indra nor did they offer any sacrifices to these gods. They were savages and barbarians and had no religion and culture like the Aryans. The dasas had also a class among them called the Nagas or serpents perhaps because they worshipped serpents or it was their emblem. The Nagas were less hostile than Dasyus. The Dasas were also phallus worshippers as they are styled Shisnadevaha in the Rig Veda and were treated most disparagingly and with contempt. Ultimately however, on coming into closer contact with the aborigines the Aryans educated them and made them into a better condition. There were then called *Sudras* while those who were uncultured were called *Panchamas* or *Nishadas*, which term included the *Chandalas* and the present day untouchables who were beyond the pale of caste being devoid of clean habits and culture. The Aryans however mixed with the reclaimed classes who were called *Sudras* and they even admitted some of the gods and deities worshipped by the Dasas as phallus, serpent etc. into their own pantheon. The worship in course of time and particularly in the time of the Mahabharata became the popular form of worship of the Hindus. The phallus however was ultimately identified with the Vedic god Rudra who also became the ruler of the demons and goblins. These latter were already worshipped by the non-Aryans. In this connection we might mention that the non-Aryans also believed in magical practices and spells and possibly the Aryans adopted some of their practices and customs. Thus we find in the tenth Mandala of the Rig Veda and particularly in the Atharvaveda references to such magical practices, spells and incantations which were freely used by the Indo Aryans as means for averting evil, sickness and disease. There were also a few incantations to preserve life,¹ to induce sleep and to procure offspring.²

1. R. V. 10-58. 2. R. V. 10-183.

(4) Abstract Deities

On examining the worship of deities in the Rig Veda one finds a tendency later on to worship abstract deities instead of concrete deities. This tendency is however to be found mostly in the tenth Mandala of the Rig Veda. Thus we find that qualities like Shraddha (Faith) and Manu (Anger) are personified as deities. In the Atharva Veda Kamu is made into a deity of love who is vividly described as darting arrows in the Puranic mythology. Similarly certain activities and qualities of the old Vedic gods are also turned into deities. Thus the idea of the deity Dhritra or creator seems to have been suggested from the act of creation. Similarly the idea of Prajapati or lord of the universe seems to have been suggested from the quality of rulership that was attributed to the Sun. In later times, the place of Prajapati was taken by Brahman. Another god of an impersonal nature is Brihaspati which means the lord of prayer. In later times, Brihaspati is described as the priest of the gods and he is also identified with the planet Jupiter. The word Jupiter is derived from the Indo-European word Zeus-pater or sky-father. Another deity is goddess Aditi which according to Professor Macdonald means that which is unbound, i.e., liberation or freedom. She is called the mother of Adityas (gods) who were her sons, i.e., sons of liberation. As opposed to Aditi is goddess Diti which means that which is bound and her sons are called Dityas or demons who were bound due to their ignorance. They always opposed the devas or the shining gods. Both the Samhitās as well as the Brahmanas abound in vivid descriptions of the perpetual fights between devas or bright gods and danavas or devils. Professor Macdonald is of opinion that the above conception of Aditi must have arisen later on after the Aryans separated from the Indo-Iranians and she is therefore younger in age than some of her sons called Adityas of whom Mitra is one. Mitra or the morning sun corresponds with the Indo-Iranian Mithra. Mitra is therefore of older date than Aditi. Professor Maxmüller however is of opinion that the name of goddess Aditi must have suggested itself to the Rishis of the Rig Veda from the idea of infinite space beyond the earth, the clouds and the sky.

It may be stated in short that the religion of the Vedic people consisted mainly of sacrifices in the holy fire with simple prayers to gods. These sacrifices at first were very simple and became complicated only later on with the increase of sacerdotalism of the priests. The Vedic people were religiously minded and had great faith in the deities worshipped by them. Vedic gods were worshipped as manifestations of the natural powers of the supreme divinity. They were not merely deities of nature as believed by some Western scholars. Several deities were worshipped by the Aryans as protectors of the moral law. The conception of Varuna as a moral god was very high and sublime and it shows the high moral level reached by the Aryans. They loved to speak the truth and lived a pious and moral life. They had a clear conception of sin which they believed was the result of transgressing the commands of God. They therefore propitiated God by fervent and suppliant prayers for forgiveness and mercy. They believed that the divine ordinances were inviolable. They had faith in the divine law that God will protect the righteous and punish the wicked. Therefore they always tried to regulate their lives accordingly. They believed that the reward of righteousness would be heaven while the punishment for wickedness would be the dark abyss which in subsequent mythology was described as hell.

We do not find in the Vedas any description of the mythological horrors of hell as found in the Puranas. In Vedic times the people were free from the spirit of pessimism which obsessed them in later times by the growing fear of metempsychosis and the endless cycles of births and deaths through which the transmigrating soul had to pass before reaching the final Moksha. They took an optimistic view of life. They prayed for long life of 100 years and material comforts of life as riches, wealth, cattle and children, their highest desire being for an eternal abode in the heaven to enjoy celestial happiness there after death.

IV. Vedic Philosophy.

(1) Classification of the Vedic gods.

After having examined the Vedic religion and the theological beliefs and practices of the Vedic people, we shall now examine what philosophical system can be deduced from the Vedic religion. Vedic

religion was essentially a polytheistic religion at least in the beginning. The gods mentioned in the Rig Veda appear to be 33 in number. There appears however a tendency even in the Rig Veda to classify the different gods worshipped by the Aryans, thus showing that the Vedic people even at that early period in the history of the world had a philosophical turn of mind to evolve a system as the basis of their philosophy. The Vedic gods may be divided into three classes as celestial, atmospheric and terrestrial gods. (1) The celestial gods are Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Savitri, Pushan, the Asvins, Usas (dawn) and Ratri (night). (2) The atmospheric gods are Indra, apam-apat, Rudra, Maruts, Vayu, Parjanya and Apas (waters) and (3) The terrestrial gods are Prithvi, Agni and Soma.

(2) One God having three forms (Trimurti).

These three classes were at first represented by Surya (Sun), Indra and Agni (fire) as the three leading gods representing the said three classes respectively. The places of these three gods were subsequently occupied by Surya (sun), Vayu and Agni (fire) in later times of the Rig Veda, and by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in the Puranic times. The last three gods combined gave us the picture of the Supreme God called Trimurti (having three forms) as believed by the present day Hindus. The source of this modern conception of God as Trimurti in his three aspects of creation, preservation and destruction of this universe can thus be traced to the above Vedic conception of the three aspects representing the three classes of celestial, atmospheric and terrestrial gods.

(3) Polytheism and pantheism

The same idea is expressed in a different way in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in the dialogue between Shakalya and the great sage and philosopher Yajnavalkya. The latter by his answer to the first question put to him by Shakalya says that the gods are 33 in number viz. 8 Vasus who are gods belonging to the terrestrial region, 11 Rudras who are gods belonging to the atmospheric region, 12 Adityas who are gods belonging to the celestial region, which with Indra and Prajāpati make up 33 gods. Then by his second answer he says that there are three gods corresponding to the terrestrial, atmospheric and celestial worlds. Ultimately by his last answer the sage

says that there is only one God who is called the Supreme Being whose body is the earth, eye the fire and mind the light and who is the final goal of all, thus establishing the Vedantic doctrine of the spiritual unity of the Universe having the Supreme Being as its fountain source. This pantheistic conception however was not worked up at once from the beginning in the Vedic period but was evolved slowly by gradations. At first we have polytheism in the Rig Veda with its pantheon of different gods existing side by side and having certain distinguishing features. These gods had also certain common features. Although we generally find the several gods of the Vedic pantheon described as existing separately, yet we clearly find in the Rig Veda early attempts to classify these gods and a tendency to evolve a system of unity. Thus at first we find several minor deities grouped together under one class as Marut ganas or troops of wind, and Vasus or the terrestrial deities etc. Sometimes even gods of different classes are brought under one head as Vishvedevaha. There is further another tendency seen in the Rig Veda of describing several gods as performing the same acts and the same functions. Thus God Agni performs the acts which are attributed to god Indra and god Soma performs the acts done by god Agni. Similarly the act of creation and government of the Universe is attributed alternately and by turns to Gods Soma, Agni, Surya (sun), Vishnu and Varuna. Sometimes one god is called by a name which is generally used for another god and there is an interchange of names. Thus god Indra is addressed by the name of sun, and god fire is addressed alternately by the names of Indra, Vishnu, Varuna, Mitra, Rudra, Savita etc. Hence we often find dual gods worshipped together i.e., Indra and Agni, Mitra and Varuna, Agni and Soma, and the pair of Ashvins. We further find that sometimes the quality of omnipresence or all pervadingness which is generally the quality of the supreme God is attributed to the different gods individually and separately. Thus we find in several hymns of the Rig Veda that the quality of omnipotence is attributed separately to the deities Vishnu, Indra, Agni, Ashvinikumar, Surya, Bṛhaspati and Aditi. From the above discussion one can easily understand that though the deities of the Vedic pantheon apparently seem distinct and separate from one another there is a clear tendency to integrate a synthetic and organic

unity among them, and evolve one uniform system which ultimately culminated in the Vedantic pantheism

(4) Henotheism.

There was at first a belief of plurality of gods each having a distinct personality with distinct qualities. The idea of oneness however after which the Vedic Rishis were yearning slowly developed from polytheism to henotheism as stated by Professor Maxmuller whereby several deities were addressed separately as the only god with an entire forgetfulness of all other gods for the time being

(5) Monotheism

The idea of monotheism then took the shape of one Supreme God as having a unique personality and without an equal, who rules over all beings including men, gods and the whole universe. This is the stage of monotheism as is typified by the hymn of Hiranyagarbha contained in the Rig Veda² which gives us an excellent idea of God as the creator and ruler of this universe and as a worthy object of devotion. It was commonly believed that the Vedic people know only polytheism or plurality of gods and that the belief of the unity of God was only the last stage as with the Greeks who ascended to monotheism from polytheism. But this has been shown to be false by Prof Maxmuller who states that though with the Aryans belief in a Supreme God above all may seem later than the belief in many gods, yet they were drawn to the divine by the same feelings as towards one's father as contrasted with the Semites who seem to have relapsed into polytheism from time to time "There is a decided preponderance of monotheistic ideas in the Chhandas period. It is monotheism which precedes polytheism of the Vedas. Remembrance of one and Infinite God breaks through the idolatrous mist like the blue sky hidden through the passing clouds." One of the oldest hymns of the Rig Veda³ sung by Rishi Dirghamitama bears witness to the truth of the above statement. The original verse of the hymn runs as follows.—"Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti, Agni Yama, Matarishvanam ahuh" i.e. "The wise invoke the one Being in various ways and call Him Agni, Yama or Matarishvan" It boldly declares the existence of one Divine Being though invoked under

different names. The Hiranyagarbha hymn contained in the Rig Veda¹ also affords another instance to refute the charge levelled by some Western critics against the Vedic Aryans that they knew only polytheism or plurality of gods and had no idea of monotheism. Prof Maxmuller however gives a direct lie to the above charge by his remarks made in connection with the above hymn "The idea of one God is expressed with such power and decision that it makes us hesitate before we deny to the Aryan nations one instinctive monotheism "

(6) Philosophical inquiries after discovery of the Supreme Being

The Vedic Aryans were of a philosophic turn of mind and they were not satisfied merely with the theistic idea of a personal God as it did not satisfy the inner craving of the human mind to find out a true philosophic basis for the unity of the whole universe and the exact relations between God, man and nature. The Vedic sēers therefore made constant attempts to discover what was the ultimate reality and what was its real nature. Their thoughts centered on the one all absorbing problem of discovering absolute truth. At the earliest period in the history of civilisation of the world they concentrated their thoughts to find out the answers to several abstruse metaphysical problems such as " who am I " ? " Is there a first cause " ? " Is there a creator of the world " ? Is the world real or is it an illusion " ? Thus we find various attempts in the hymns of the tenth mandala of the Rig Veda to discover one Supreme Deity. This at first led to hymns to Vishvedevaha which were addressed to several gods belonging to different classes but which were grouped together as belonging to one group as stated above.

Then the mind was fixed to the idea of one personal supreme being called Prajapati or lord of the universe who was conceived under different names as the creator and ruler of this universe. Thus he was called (1) *Daksha*² or one possessing skill from whom was born Aditi who was the mother of all gods (2) *Twastri*³ i. e. a workman or a carpenter who created the world including even the

1. (R V 10-121), 2. (R. V. 10-72) ,3. (R. V 10-110.)

Vedic deities Agni Indra and Brahmanaspati (3) *Brahmanaspati*¹ or Lord of Prayer who then became Brihaspati or the priest of Gods. (4) *Uchavaktrina*² or maker of all and creator of the Universe as the only God. He is described as all seeing having eyes mouths, arms and feet on every side and forging with 2 arms as wings like a smith the father creator and generator and the unborn sustainer in his navel of the primeval geria of the Universe wherein all the gods were seen together and which was held by the Apurita (winters) in their womb³ and lastly (5) *Hiranyagarbha*⁴ the golden germ which is described as the supervisor of the primeval waters and which rose from them as the golden germ and as lord and sustainer of this universe. He is also described as superior to all the deities. He is identical with Prajapati (lord of the universe) in the last verse. The above hymns gave us a clear idea of God as a Supreme personal Being and as the creator and ruler of this Universe as evolved by the Vedic Aryans.

(7) Cosmogonic hymns

The idea of God as a personal being and a creator and ruler did not however satisfy the inquisitive mind of the Vedic Aryans who yearned after discovery of the philosophic truth of Absolute reality and we find a reflection of this philosophic inquisitiveness of the human mind in the most beautiful cosmogonic hymn in the whole of the Rig Veda known as the Nasadiya Sukta⁵ which is the earliest Vedic source of Maya Vada or the doctrine of the illusion of the world which was subsequently evolved in a most able manner by Shankaracharya. This hymn is of the greatest philosophical interest as it contains clear germs of the later Upanishad philosophy. I shall therefore reproduce here a verbatim translation of the same for information of the reader —

- (1) There was not then the non-existent nor the existent
then There was not the air nor the heaven which is
beyond What did it contain? Where? In whose protec-
tion? Was there water unfathomable profound?

1. (R. V 10-72) 2. (R. V 10-81) 3. (R. V 10-82) 4. (R. V 10-121).
5. (R. V 10-129)

- (2) There was not death nor immortality then There was not the beacon of night nor of day That one breathed windless by its own power. Other than that there was not anything beyond
- (3) Darkness was in the beginning hidden by darkness. Indistinguishable, this all was water That which, coming into being, was covered with the void, that one arose through the power of heat.
- (4) Desire in the beginning came upon that. That was the first seed of mind Sages seeking in their hearts with wisdom found out the bond of the existent in the non-existent.
- (5) Their cord was extended across was there below or was there about ? There were impregnators, there were powers, there was energy below, there was impulse above
- (6) Who knows truly ? who shall here declare, whence it has been produced, whence is this creation ? By the creation of this (Universe) the gods (came afterwards.) Who then knows whence it has arisen ?
- (7) Whence the Creation has arisen ? Whether he founded it or he did not ? He who is in the highest Heaven, is its surveyor, he only knows or else he knows not.

The above hymn contains several beautiful thoughts of mystic philosophy and gives us a clear insight into the inner working of the mind of the seer and his thoughts about the true philosophic conception of the nature of the Supreme Being both as a personal Creator and Ruler of this Universe called GOD by the theologians and also as a pure spirit of pristine purity detached from the relations of this phenomenal world. The seer is sceptic at the end about the nature of the first cause from which the universe emanated as to whether it was personal or impersonal. He is not dogmatic on the point and rightly so as it is impossible to define God exactly, as to do so would be to limit His perfection and completeness. He however seems to suggest after mature deliberation and deep reflection that it is a super personal cause

from which the Universe emanated. The Rishi tries to reach the impersonal from the personal. The line "anidarantam Swadhaya tadekam" (it breathed windless by its own power) also supports the conclusion that the Rishi had in his mind the idea of an impersonal supreme being. In the above cosmogenic hymn the origin of the world is explained as an emanation of Sat or the manifest from Asat or the unmanifest. The first object that came into being was water from which desire evolved as the first seed of mind. Desire was the first seed of creation of the concrete from the abstract. In desire or law was discovered the bond between the created and the uncreated. Then the poet gives a description of the male and female powers just before describing the generation of this universe whose source is a mystery. The gods are born after the creation of the universe. Hitherto was a mere evolution or emanation of the manifest from the unmanifest by the union of the male principle and the female principle. In fact this is the starting point of the classical Sankhya philosophy started by Kapila which was atheistic and according to which the Universe is believed to be a natural evolution by the spontaneous combination of Purusha and Prakriti or the male principle and the female principle without any third principle as a connecting link. But this atheistic conception of natural evolution of the Universe is repugnant to the spirit of the Vedic religion and is therefore contradicted by the Seer in the very next verse in which an entirely new thought is set out. It postulates definitely that there is a superintendent and overseer of this Universe in the highest heaven who surveys it and he knows whence this Universe is created and whether he created it or not. Thus the existence of God as a Supreme Being and overseer of the Universe is clearly established. In the last verse however a doubt is created by the Rishi not about the existence of the Supreme Being and Overseer of the Universe who is already postulated but about the exact process of creation as to whether He created the Universe from Himself or from nothing as believed in the Christian religion or from matter existing by itself. The poet first asserts that the Overseer of the Universe knows whence this creation has arisen and whether He is its creator or not as the creation has come from him. Then he immediately corrects himself and raises

a doubt whether the said overseer of the universe knows the mystery of creation Prof Maxmuller gives two interpretations of the last sentence of the last verse which reads 'or else does not know?' as meaning either (1) that it would be a defiance to doubt the former assertion giving the mystery of creation as having arisen from God or (2) that he knows not the mystery of creation thus showing a doubt as to the correctness of the above assertion which according to Prof Maxmuller "is not irreconcilable with the spirit of timidity which shrinks at asserting anything on a point where human reason can only guess and hope and if it ventures onwards it can say in the last resort 'behold, we know not anything.'"

(8) Philosophical conception of the Supreme Being in the Purusha Sukta

Another cosmogenic hymn of great importance from a philosophical point of view is the famous Purushasukta or hymn of man contained in the Rig Veda¹ This hymn relates to the creation of the material world including objects of nature and gods, men and beasts etc from the Supreme Being called the primeval person who is described as having a thousand heads, thousand eyes and thousand feet The agents of creation were the Gods while the material stuff out of which the world was created is the body of the primeval person or Purusha from whom Virat an evolved person also called Purusha was born The act of creation is treated as a divine sacrifice in which the evolved person or Purusha is the victim whose body was cut up into several parts which were then offered as an oblation in the sacrificial fire and they became portions of the Universe The origin of the four castes is also traced to the above Vedic hymn The four castes are represented as having been born from the four parts of the body of the victim Purusha which respectively became the four castes Thus his mouth was the Brahmin or priestly caste, his two arms were made Kshatriya or the military caste, his two thighs the Vaishya or the merchant caste, while from his two feet the Sudras or the servant caste was born. The act of sacrifice was described as the first Divine ordinance an observance of

which gave the fruition of celestial nioode which was Moksha or final emanicipation of the Vedic people as the summum bonum of life. Though the above hymn lays down sacrifice as the highest religion and duty the philosophic view is quite different from that of the old hymns of the Rig Veda as it is distinctly pantheistic in strain as will appear from verse two which states that "Purusha or God is this all that has been and that will be." The creation with its innumerable names and forms of this variegated world full of diversity is described as the greatness or glory of Purusha. The description of the highest divinity as a Purusha is unique from a philosophical point of view. It gives us a true philosophical insight into the real nature of the Supreme person who is not identical with the world in the literal sense as wrongly understood by some misguided persons from a superficial consideration of the immanent aspect of God and without proper knowledge of the doctrine of monism. The Supreme person has also another transcendental nature of pristine purity and great excellence. The real nature of the Supreme person exceeds by far the glory of this whole universe which is comprehended within only a fourth of Him while three-fourths of Him which is immortal and in heaven is concealed from the sight of the ordinary worldly people who are not initiated in the esoteric doctrines of philosophy. This picture of the Supreme person as the highest Being having immortality as his essence became the true basis of the pantheistic philosophy of the Upanishads or Vedanta which arose later on and became the central pivot round which the exuberant labyrinth of the innumerable schools of philosophy that grew in the scholastic period entwined their multitudinous branches far and wide. It is important to note that the above ideal picture of the highest spiritual divinity as having a dual aspect of immanence and transcendence and the source of the vast cosmos has harmonised the two most important branches of theology and metaphysics contained in the Upanishads so thoroughly and distinctly as to leave no scope whatever for the unhappy conflicts between the said two branches of philosophy as are seen in the West, where religion is divorced altogether from philosophy. I shall deal with this part of philosophy later on when I discuss the principles of the Upanishada Philosophy.

V. Vedic Eschatology.

(1) Reward of heaven after death for good works

We have already seen above that the highest aim of life to the Vedic people was to secure an immortal place in the paradise after death and enjoy celestial happiness as the fruit of sacrificial and virtuous deeds done by them in life. The hope of enjoyment of eternal happiness in the paradise cheered the last moments of the Vedic Aryans. They had full faith in the divine moral law that the righteous would be rewarded while the sinners would be punished as clearly appears from their suppliant prayers to god Varuna full of confessions for the misdeeds and sins committed by them in life thoughtlessly in ignorance so as to incur the god's displeasure and craving for mercy. In the Rig Veda, we find a belief of the yonder world of the pious called Sukruta loka¹ as a reward for righteous and virtuous deeds and of abyss of blind darkness into which demons and sinners were plunged as a punishment for their misdeeds.² The virtues which are rewarded by admission to heaven are liberality, austerity or self-restraint and heroism in the battle.³

(2) Celestial pleasures of the deceased Fathers (Pitris) in Company with gods.

The Rig Veda contains five hymns on death and the future life,⁴ from which it appears that cremation was the usual method of disposing of the dead with the holy Mantras as one of the sacraments. Hymn X-14 is addressed to god Yama. Fire conveys the spirit of the deceased called Preta to the Yonder world of Pitars or (the fathers) and the gods. Passing along by the path trodden by the Fathers, the spirit of the dead man goes to the other world where he meets with the Fathers who revel with Yama in the highest heaven. Here uniting with a glorious body he enters upon a life of bliss which is free from the bodily infirmities and in which all desires are fulfilled, in company with the gods and the two kings Yama and Varuna. It may be noted that in the Vedas, Yama is the king of the blessed world of the Fathers in the Heaven and not a king of hell as depicted in the Puranic Mythology.

1. (R. V. 10-16-4), 2 (R. V. 10-87), 3. (R. V. 10-154), 4. (R. V. 10-14 to 18).

(3) Enjoyment in company with deceased relations

The next Hymn X-16 points out the places where the various parts of the dead man's body were directed to go while being consumed by fire. The above Mantra is uttered while the body of the dead person is being partially consumed on the funeral pyre. The translation of the relevant verses of the hymn runs as follows.—

"The Sun receive thine eye, the wind thy breath, go according to thy nature to earth or heaven go if it suits you into the waters; go make thine home in plants with all the members ¹ Thus the eye went to god sun and the breath went to god wind. The spirit of the departed soul after death either went to earth or heaven or to waters or to plants. It was further believed that on death, a man was divided into three separate parts. One part was burnt and its remnants such as bones were buried in the earth. Another part went to the deities of nature as sun wind etc., while the third part which was unburnt went beyond the first heaven which is watery, and the second heaven which is starry, farther on to the third heaven which is the abode of the Fathers ². Then the spirit being invested with a body of light went in a car or on wings³ to the land of eternal light.⁴ There fanned by delicious winds, and cooled by showers he recovers his complete form, body mind and life⁵ and reaches the celestial abode of god Yama under the Ashvattha tree⁶ drinking with the gods and the minstrels playing on the flute and singing his praises ⁷. This is the region of Vishnu's highest step.⁸ There the departed souls join the company of the Fathers and lead a happy life reunited with Father, mother, wives and children.⁹

(4) Invocation of the deceased Fathers (Pitris) for blessings (Shraddhas).

Hymn X-15 in the Rig Veda is addressed to the Pitaras or Fathers who dwell in the third heaven which is the highest step of Vishnu. Various groups of ancestors are invoked for benediction,

1. (R. V 10-16-3) 2 (A. V 18-2-48) 3 (A. V 4-34-4) 4 (R. V 9-113-7) 5 (A. V 18-2-24) 6. (A. V 5-4-3) 7 (R. V 10-185), 8. (R. V 1-155) 9 (A. V 6-120); (12-3-67).

as Angirasas and Atharvans, the Bṛighus and the Vasisthas and others. The Pitaras or the Fathers are classed as higher, middle and lower. They revel with Yama and feast with the gods. They are fond of Soma and desire libation of the same. They eat the offerings made to them along with Yama. They come here on the same Carit as India and the gods and receive oblations as their food. They are entreated to intercede for their worshippers and implored not to injure their descendants for any wrong done against them, and to show their good graces by bestowing upon them long life, riches, children etc. The path trodden by the Fathers as the reward of good deeds is called Pitṛiyana while that as the reward of prayers and devotion to the gods is called Devayana.

The Śhrāddha ceremonies which are performed by the Hindus for invoking the benedictions of their deceased ancestors and their blessings suggested in the verses of the Rig Veda, are the same even to-day and they give us an idea of the views held by the Vedic Aṛyans on eschatology. The Zoroastrian Parsis of India to-day also observe ceremonies similar to the Śhrāddha ceremonies of the Hindus which are called Muktaḍ ceremonies whereby they piously invoke the spirits of their departed relations called Farvaḥs.

(5) Consignment to the infernal region of the sinners.

Though the idea of hell with all the horrors thereof as depicted in subsequent Puranic mythologies was not known in the period of Rig Veda, they did conceive the idea of an abyss of darkness to which the sinners were consigned along with those who broke the divine laws and traditions and transgressed the injunctions relating to sacrifices and the worship of gods, as appears from the following texts of the Rig Veda which allude to a place of future punishment. The said texts run as follows —

“Like brotherless females, unchaste, like evil women who hate their husbands, wicked unrighteous and leeches, they are destined for that deep abyss.”¹

“Knowing, he beholds all creature, he hurls the hated and rebellious into that abyss.”² In the Atharvaveda and the Brahmanas
1 (R. V. 1-5-7), 2 (R. V. 9-75-8)

the picture of hell with its horrors and sufferings became more and more dreadful. It is stated in the Atharvaveda that evil people went to Naraka or hell, the house down below. There the wicked offenders sit to the middle of a stream running with blood, devouring.¹ It is the lowest darkness full of demons² and Yatudhavis or female goblins.⁴

(8) Genesis of the law of Karma or retribution

The idea of the requital of virtues and misdeeds by rewards and punishments is developed more in the Brahmanas. "For what so ever food a man eats in this world by the same he is eaten again in the other."⁵ In the Shatapatha Brahmana⁶ we find a vivid picture of the vision of punishment in the other world that was permitted to sage Bhṛigu. The sage is taken to different regions of the hell where he sees men shrieking aloud on being hewn to pieces and chopped up limb by limb by others crying the words "Thus have they done to us in yonder world and so we do them again in this world."

VI Interpretations of the Vedas.

(1) Different methods of interpretation

To enable us to have a thorough knowledge of the religious and philosophical views contained in the Vedic literature it is of the utmost importance that we should first have a knowledge of the different methods of interpretation employed by various Vedic scholars, Western as well as Oriental for arriving at a correct meaning of the Vedic Texts. The standpoint adopted by the European scholars in interpreting the Vedas is quite different from that of the Oriental scholars and the Mīmāṃsākas. The former look on the Vedas as the earliest piece of literary document, while the latter hold the traditional view of interpretation and treat the Vedas as Revealed Religion and eternal authority on Dharma or religion. The meanings of a considerable portion of the hymns of the Rg Veda are clear but still many passages and verses are obscure and unintelligible as

1. (A. V. 2-14-8) 2. (A. V. 5-19-3) 3. (A. V. 10-2-8) 4. (A. V. 2-14-8) 5. (S. B. 12-9-1) 6. (S. B. 11-6-1)

(2) Etymological method of interpretation.

It has been objected by some that the Veda is not worth interpretation as some Mantras do not convey any meaning whatever while others are ambiguous and absurd and sometimes even mutually contradictory. As a matter of fact, Yaska the author of *Nirukta* which is the oldest commentary extant on the subject of Vedic interpretation quotes the opinion of one of his predecessors Kautsa, that the Vedic hymns were obscure, devoid of meaning and contradictory of each other. Yaska has however repudiated the above charge of the objector and shown by reasons how to interpret correctly the Mantras which are regarded as meaningless. The *Shatapatha Brahman* which is one of the most monumental works on the white *Yajurveda* composed by the great sage *Yajnyavalkya* has also given interpretations of some difficult Vedic hymns so as to deduce therefrom a proper meaning. In the *Sutra* period we find that *Jaimini* the author of *Purva Mimansa Sutra*s has also laid down scientifically various rules for a correct interpretation of the Vedas to which I shall advert when I deal with the *Mimansa* philosophy.

(3) Traditional method of interpretation.

The oldest regular commentary of the *Rig Veda* was written by that well-known Oriental scholar *Sayana* in about the fourteenth century which is of immense value to us in understanding correctly the meanings of several difficult and obscure Vedic verses. *Sayana* however was an orthodox Vedic scholar believing in the authority of tradition and has followed the traditional method of interpretation of the Vedas. He has also written memorable commentaries on the *Samhitas* of the remaining Vedas and several *Brahmanas* such as the *Shatapatha Brahmana*, *Taittiriya Brahmana* etc. *Sayana* has taken great pains in explaining abstruse passages of the *Samhitas* and the theological and ritual texts of the *Brahmanas* with which he was familiar and his commentaries are invaluable guides to every one who enters on the study of the *Rig Veda* and without their help it would have been next to impossible to any of us to have a correct meaning of the Vedic Texts. Professor *Maxmüller* has also paid a glowing tribute to *Sayana* for the monumental work of translating the Vedas in the following terms. 'I do not wonder

that others who have more recently entered on that study are inclined to speak disparagingly of the scholastic interpretation of Sayana. They hardly know how much we owe to his guidance in effecting our first entrance into this fortress of Vedic language and Vedic religion. We ought to bear in mind that five and twenty years ago we could never at least have gained a firm footing without his leading strings."

(4) Critical method of interpretation

Unfortunately however we do not find a continuity of unbroken tradition preserved from the time when the Vedic hymns were composed as is evidenced by a considerable difference of opinion among the predecessors of Sayana. This has made the task of the interpreter more difficult in deciding about the proper meaning of the Vedic Texts. Yaska's own interpretations which are mostly based on etymology are often misleading and they conflict with the interpretations of Sayana which often differ from those of Yaska. The renowned Vedic philologist and scholar Professor Roth has therefore substituted the critical method of interpretation for the traditional method relying on internal evidence by a comparison of all parallel words and ideas, outside evidence derived from the Zoroastrian literature, and comparative philology. He has refused to accept the interpretations made by Sayana as not being free from traditional bias and prejudice and undervalued the evidence of native tradition. Mr Roth was of opinion that a European scholar was more fitted to interpret the Rig Veda than any Brahmin Commentator as the European is free from all religious and sectarian bias and he has a more developed critical faculty and can take a broader and more comprehensive view of things. At present a great weight is attached to the interpretations of the Rig Veda by Professor Roth. They are often original and worthy of consideration. Mr Wilson however who has also translated the Rig Veda relies more on the traditional method of interpretation by Sayana. In my opinion, both the traditional as well as the critical methods of interpretations are equally useful and important, if we want to deduce a proper and correct meaning of the Vedas and we cannot afford to neglect either method.

CHAPTER III.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS

I. Introductory.

We have already seen in the last chapter that the Vedas consist of 2 parts viz, the Samhitās and the Brahmanas and that the concluding portions of the Brahmanas are called the Upanishads which begin with Aranyakas. The Samhitās of the four Vedas which consist of Mantras or hymns were studied and repeated orally by students belonging to the first Ashrama called 'Brahmacharya' Ashram or the stage of students. The Brahmanas deal with the sacrificial rituals that were to be performed by householders belonging to the second Ashrama or the stage of life called the 'Grihasthashrama' as a part of their sacred Dharma or religion. The Aranyakas or forest books were intended for the study of the anchorites in the woods belonging to the third stage of life called the 'Vanprastha' Ashram. The Aranyakas lead ultimately to the 'Upanishads' or 'Vedānta' as the concluding portions of the Vedas which were meant for the ascetics belonging to the fourth and the highest Ashram called the Sanyasa Ashram or the stage of asceticism. The Upanishads were treatises which particularly dealt with abstruse metaphysical and psychological problems. Their attitude towards Vedic ritualism was at first one of opposition. They regarded the Vedic ritual as insufficient to lead to Moksha or final emancipation as the main aim of the Vedic rituals was to obtain worldly welfare. The Upanishadas on the other hand preached the new doctrine of eternal bliss and peace called Moksha which was the summum bonum of life which could not be obtained by mere observance of Vedic rituals but by the saving grace of philosophic knowledge alone. Ultimately however, their attitude towards Vedic ritualism became more conciliatory. The Upanishads contain the essence of true wisdom and philosophy that dawned upon the sages of the Bharat-varsha in the quiet retreats of forest far away from the humdrum of city life. They are the fountain source of the orthodox schools of Indian

philosophy which were started later on claiming their foundation on the rock bed of Upanishads. The Upanishads have been the source of the highest inspiration and intellectual resting place not only to millions of the faithful Hindus but also to several eminent scholars and philosophers of the West as will appear from the following quotations. The philosophy taught in the Upanishads has been the source of solace to minds like Schopenhauer the great German philosopher as would appear from his following remarks "There is no study more beneficial and elevating to mankind than the study of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death." Another German Professor Paul Deussen was so much interested in the Upanishad philosophy that he specially came down to India and critically studied the Sanskrit language and the Upanishads for a number of years. He makes the following observations: "God the sole author of all good in us is not as in the old Testament a Being contrasted with and distinct from us but rather our divine self. Thus and much more we may learn from the Upanishads." Victor Cousin the well known French writer on philosophical history has said "when we read the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East above all those of India which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discover there many a truth and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which European genius has sometimes stopped that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the Eastland to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy." The above few quotations would satisfy the reader as to what deep impressions were created on some of the noblest minds of the West by the Upanishad philosophy. Etymologically the word Upanishad comes from the root sad to sit which with the prefixes Upa and Ni would mean "a sitting beside" i.e. a lesson taught by the teacher to pupils sitting close by him. According to the traditional interpretation however, it means a mystery or secret science contained in enigmatic formulae in which they taught the esoteric doctrines to the few select students who were initiated and qualified to receive the highest knowledge. The contents of the Upanishads give rise to two systems one esoteric or philosophical, containing the metaphysical truths for the select few who were qualified and another

exoteric or theological for the average persons who could not grasp abstract truth and principles but who wanted a concrete picture of God for worship. I shall discuss below the main subjects forming parts of the Upanishad philosophy from the two above standpoints for the sake of clearness and to avoid confusion which is likely to arise otherwise. The main subjects generally treated in the Upanishads are ontology, theology, cosmology, psychology and eschatology. There are also casual statements made about rules of Ashrama Dharma and good conduct but which form a very subordinate part. Besides this the Upanishads and particularly the older ones as the Chhandogya and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishads contain several instructive dialogues, anecdotes, and parables which seem to have been specially meant to elucidate and illustrate in a homely and interesting manner abstract philosophic principles.

I. Classification of the Upanishadas.

There are extant at present about 112 Upanishads in all but most of them are modern except about fourteen Upanishads which are older in date. Out of these, the well-known scholiast and philosopher Shankaracharya has written commentaries on about 11 of them. Professor Paul Deussen divides the Upanishads into four classes and distinguishes them as of four successive periods of time as follows —

I The ancient prose Upanishads —

1 Brihadaranyaka

2. Chhandogya

3 Taittiriya

4 Aitareya.

5. Kaushitaki and

6 Kena or Talvakar (partly in prose and partly in poetry)

The order shown above is chronological. It will be seen from the above that the Brihadaranyaka and the Chhandogya Upanishads are the oldest of all the Upanishads and the most important as being constantly referred to in the Brahma (Vedant) Sutras which are brief aphorisms dealing with the Upanishadic doctrines of

philosophy known as Vedānta composed by the Venerable sage Bādarāyaṇa on which Śaṅkara and several other Āchāryas have written commentaries in the scholastic period

II The Metrical Upanishads —

- 7 Kathaka
- 8 Isha
- 9 Srotashwatara
- 10 Mundaka and
- 11 Mahanarayana

III The later prose Upanishads —

- 12 Prasna
- 13 Mnitravann and
- 14 Mndukya.

IV The last in date are Atharva Upanishads dealing with Yoga Sanyasa (Asceticism) and devotion to God, Shiva or Vishnu. They were mostly composed in prose at a considerably later period than those of the first three classes. Nor were they recognised by the leading theologians of the Vedānta.

I shall now classify the 14 main Upanishads according to the Shakhas or branches of the 4 Vedas —

I Rig Veda Upanishads —

- 1 Aitareya and
- 2 Kaushitaki

II Samaveda Upanishads.—

- 3 Kena or Talvakara and
- 4 Chhandogya

III (a) Black Yajurvedic Upanishads.—

- 5 Taittiriya
- 6 Kathaka
- 7 Mahanarayana
- 8 Srotashwatara and
- 9 Maitrayana.

(b) White Yajurveda or Vajasaneya Upanishad —

10. Bṛhadaranyaka and
11. Iśa.

IV. Atharva Veda Upanishads—

12. Mundaka
13. Prashna and
14. Mandukya.

Principal Topics of the Upanishads

The Upanishads generally deal with the following topics, viz. —

1. The nature of Niguna Brahman or the impersonal and attributeless Absolute of Metaphysics.
2. The nature of Atman or self and the doctrine of immortality of the soul.
3. The ideal relation between Brahman and Atman.
4. The nature of Saguna Brahman or personal God with attributes.
5. Upasanas or modes of worship of the personal God.
6. Cosmology and theories of creation and causation.
7. The theory of Mayavada or illusion of the phenomenal world, and the apparent plurality of names and forms.
8. Psychology or the doctrine of the individual soul and his relations to Brahman.
9. The doctrine of Pantheism or the unity of the universe of nature, souls and Brahman.
10. The science of Eschatology dealing with the fate of souls after death and the description of the various paths by which they travel after death.
11. The doctrine of transmigration of the souls.
12. Ashrama Dharma or duties relating to the four stages of life.
13. Preparatory means for Sanyasa or asceticism.
14. Ethics or rules of good conduct.
15. Relation of knowledge and action.
16. The Doctrine of Moksha or emancipation.

II. Ontology.

In the Upanishad period we find a growing reaction and dissatisfaction against the entire ritualistic system of the Brahmanas and a greater yearning after acquisition of knowledge of the Supreme Being and Reality beyond the phenomenal world. Deep speculations were started on the Vedic conception of paradise as the summum bonum of life and doubts were raised against the belief of eternity of Celestial happiness. The stay in the heaven as the highest fruit

of sacrifice was believed to be only transitory and not permanent and the conception of Moksha or emancipation was radically altered. It was believed that sacrifices and good works gave admission only to Pitruya or the way of the Fathers which after a temporary sojourn in the moon leads back to a new birth on the earth while knowledge of the Supreme Being leads to Salvation and eternal happiness. They therefore concentrated all their thoughts to the determination of the nature of the Supreme Being or Reality, called *Brahman* or *Atman*.

1 Nature of Nirguna (attributeless) Brahman or the Absolute

All the thoughts of the Upanishads turned round the above two fundamental objects viz. *Brahman* and *Atman*. As a rule these terms were employed synonymously in the Upanishads. The Supreme Being is sometimes called *Brahman* and sometimes *Atman*. *Brahman* is a neuter noun which stands for Nirguna (attributeless) impersonal Supreme Being. The word *Brahman* is derived from the root *Brih* which means what grows &c. or is spirited. According to Prof. Deussen it first meant a prayer and then the object which is prayed to. The above derivation of *Brahman* is ritualistic and it was followed by Mr. Roth. Professor Maxmüller however does not accept the above derivation and he offers a different explanation of *Brahman* deriving it from *Brihas* which means word or speech as in the word *Brihaspati* (Lord of the Speech) and it means that which utters or manifests or creates. The idea of *Brahman* as an impersonal Supreme Being in its essential form or nature was evolved in the Upanishads by slow degrees as meaning *Sat*, (being) *Chit*, (consciousness or thought) and *Ananda* (bliss). In later Vedanta *Brahman* is described as *Sachidananda* by a combination of his above three essential attributes of *Sat* (Being) *Chit* (thought) and *Ananda* (Bliss). Another definition of the impersonal *Brahman* is given in the second chapter of the *Taittiriya* Upanishad called the *Brahmnananda Valli*. *Brahman* or the impersonal Supreme Being is there defined as *Satyam*, *Inanam*, *Anantam* that is existence, knowledge and infinity. The whole text explaining the meaning of the above definition of *Brahman* runs as follows —“Who knows *Brahman* who is existence knowledge and infinity, as

dwelling within the cavity of the heart and in the infinite ether, enjoys all desires at one and the same time together with the omniscient Brahman." The nature of Brahman being infinity, it is not possible to describe it in positive terms but it is described negatively as 'not this,-not this'. All the other predicates of truth, knowledge, infinity and bliss are combined in a fresh definition of Brahman given in the later Upanishad called Sarvopnishadsara. It may be noted here that the above predicates are not attributes of Brahman which is Nirguna or attributeless but they constitute the essential nature of the Being of Brahman ontologically. Brahman by essential nature is infinity. It is therefore impossible to limit Brahman by defining it as possessing attributes or qualities which constitute limits or Upadhis to its essential nature. The Upanishads therefore distinguish two forms of Brahman called the higher (Para) Nirguna (Attributeless) Brahman and the lower (Apara) Saguna Brahman possessing attributes, from two different standpoints of Esoteric Metaphysics and exoteric theology which are kept entirely distinct. It is not given to all to understand the Esoteric or secret doctrines of the Upanishads and so the Upanishads give an exoteric description of Brahman as possessing attributes and forms for satisfying the practical needs of worship as required by theology. It would be however wrong to suppose from the above description of Brahman that it is two-fold in nature as taught by Vallabha the founder of one of the sects of Vaishnavas born in about the fifteenth century, relying on the novel doctrine of Viuddha Dharma ashraya (substate of opposite attributes) according to which all contraries can co-exist at the same time in Brahman. But this is on the face of it absurd as one and the same object cannot be with and without attributes and with and without form in itself. The truth is that Brahman by nature is attributeless and only one but it is only viewed from two different stand points as attributeless for the purpose of the highest metaphysical knowledge and with attributes for the purpose of theological worship and is described as Higher Brahman and Lower Brahman esoterically and exoterically respectively. The attribution of predicates or qualities to the Higher Brahman who is attributeless cannot for a moment

detract from or exaggerate the essential nature and purity of Brahman as it is attributed and transcendental. The limiting attributes are ascribed to Brahman only for the practical purpose of worship which requires the positing of some objective with a distinct shape and form but they are to be transcended ultimately when the devotee is initiated and thoroughly qualified for esoteric knowledge and realizes by intuition that all sense of duality between the subjective and the objective or the devotee and the object of devotion is an illusion and that spiritual unity alone is real. It would be also necessary to clear here another misconception about the nature of Brahman. Brahman is pure and infinite spirit of an immaterial nature. From this some persons have wrongly concluded that Brahman is only an abstraction of truth, thought and life. In their opinion Brahman is a mere ideal existing in our mind as an abstraction of the above predicates having no personal objective existence just as we have an abstract notion of the class concept of cow separately from individual cows belonging to the cow class. This is however an entirely false notion. Brahman or the Supreme Being is not a mere abstraction but has an objective supra-personal nature which is real. The only thing that can be predicated of the attributables Brahman for certain is that it is not *asat* that is non-existence but it is *sat* or essential existence. It means that Brahman is a Being having existence as its nature but not as its attribute or quality. It may be stated here that the empirical world of names and forms is also called *Sat* or real from the standpoint of experience. But Brahman is distinguished from all natural objects called real from the empirical point of view by the predicate of eternity or indestructibility without undergoing any change whatever in its pristine nature and from all embodied souls by the predicate of immortality being neither born nor undergoing death. Thus in the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad*, Brahman is called *Satyanva Satyam* that is truly real in this world of empirical reality for which the simple word *Satyn* is used.¹ This doctrine of *Asat* (unreal) and *Sat* (real) may be traced back to the famous *Nasadiya* hymn of the *Rig Veda* which is already explained at great length in Chapter II,² and which also

1. (B. U. --I-20) = (R. V. 10-129)

contains the earliest germs of the doctrine of Mayavada or illusive theory of the world. The second essence of Brahman is thought or intelligence which is also not its attribute but its nature. This should not be taken to mean that the attributes of existence and thought are separately ascribed to Brahman as there is no duality in the integrity of Brahman and both the attributes are identical. As a matter of fact the essence of being is identical with intelligence and that of intelligence is identical with being. The attribute of thought is ascribed to Brahman to distinguish it from inanimate objects thus suggesting that it has life or self-consciousness as its essential nature. This might however lead one to suppose that the embodied soul is Brahman. To remove such a misapprehension, the third attribute of bliss or happiness is ascribed to Brahman as constituting its essential nature, thus distinguishing it from man of the empirical world who undergoes many sufferings and miseries, in the trials of life in this world. In short, we may say that the esoteric conception of Brahman is one Supreme Being having a distinct objective existence separate from nature and man and having the predicates of existence, thought and bliss constituting its essence and real nature and not as separate attributes, their relationship being one of identity and non-separateness or Advaita.

2 The nature of Atman or Self.

We have already seen above that of the fundamental concepts of the Upanishadas, we find two of them expressed by the terms Brahman and Atman which are as a rule used synonymously for one and the same object ontologically. The word Brahman however is generally used as the cosmical principle of the Universe, while the term Atman is used as the psychical principle. But there is no difference in the fundamental concept of these two terms, which mean the same object. As a matter of fact we often find the two terms equated and interchanged with each other in the Upanishads. The word Atman is a masculine noun while Brahman is a neuter one. The word Atman was derived etymologically from the verb 'an' which means 'to breathe'. It meant breath. Then it meant vital breath, life, soul or self constituting the innermost nature of everything and particularly of man. Then the verb 'an' was changed to 'at'

which means 'to pervade' and Atman meant the highest person who is all pervading. The word Atman however related more to the personal aspect of the Supreme Being while the word Brahman related more to the impersonal or abstract aspect of the Supreme Being. However there was no difference whatever in the meaning of the said two terms as pointed out above. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Atman is described as the highest Being and the summum bonum and goal of all philosophical inquiry. It is stated in the said Upanishad that 'Atma should be seen, heard, thought, and meditated. By perception, hearing, thought and knowledge of Atman (self) all this universe is known' ¹. The same Upanishad describes Atman as the Supreme Self and inner soul which is within all and which rules them from within. Thus — "He is thy Soul, the inner guide, the immortal. He sees but is not seen. There is none beside him that sees" ². Thus Atma who alone exists is the knowing subject in us and he sustains the whole universe which is comprehended within it and beyond which there exists nothing. With the knowledge of Atman everything is known. The oldest Upanishads recognised only one Supreme Soul which alone existed and created the Universe and as Atman it entered the Universe created by it. The original conception of Atman was purely idealistic which denied the separate existence of the manifold Universe. Then the idea underwent a change and it became cosmogenistic and pan-theistic which allowed relative existence to the Universe within the Atman as its supreme self whose unity was however maintained throughout. In course of time a distinction was made between the supreme soul and the individual soul. The supreme soul or pure spirit is designated as the light while the individual soul is called the shadow ³. The Individual soul was then called Bhokta or enjoyer. He resulted from the union of supreme soul with the organs Manas (mind) and senses by the Maya Shakti or mysterious power of the Supreme soul. The individual soul as enjoyer is further brought out in the Shvetashwata Upanishad ⁴.

The Upanishads have further shown a distinction between two kinds of souls viz. the soul in bondage and the emancipated

1 (B. U. 2-4-5). 2 (B. U. 3-7). 3. (K. U. 3-4). 4 (S. U. 1-8 & 5-7)

soul The first is the embodied soul who is migrating in the Sansara or world of births and deaths which is endless and is imprisoned there until he acquires the light of true philosophical knowledge when he is finally released from the bondage of births and deaths in the Sansara and he realises that he is the emancipated soul or highest Supreme Being The Upanishads have given a beautiful picture of the divine souls who are delivered from the Sansara and have an abode in Brahma Loka I shall deal with the subject more when I treat of Eschatology of the Upanishads These divine souls get final emancipation on having a true vision of their whole being in the Supreme Being and the highest metaphysical knowledge at the time of the Mahapralaya or destruction of the cosmos The above distinction between individual and supreme souls is not final according to the Upanishad doctrine of Advaita or monism but is only transitional and is ultimately transcended in the ultimate unity of Parabrahman or the Absolute

In short it may be stated that the essential nature of individual souls is Atman or the Supreme self, which is identical with Brahman ontologically The individual soul even in the empiric state is not separate from the Supreme Being and his apparent duality from the Supreme self and the other souls and nature is due to avidya or ignorance which is not real but is finally destroyed by a true spiritual enlightenment

3. The Doctrine of Advaita or non-dual monism.

We have already stated above that the only reality in this universe from a philosophic point of view is the Supreme Being called Brahman or Atman There is an organic unity of the whole which is ever maintained by the miraculous power of the Supreme Being The whole of the Universe consisting of the innumerable inanimate objects of nature as well as the migrating souls is comprehended within the Absolute having their essential being within the latter by an organic unity which never allows the universe any independent existence apart from Brahman or the Supreme Being Neither the objects of nature nor the migrating souls can exist or perform their functions on their own account as detached from the Supreme Being who as a matter of fact always controls the universe from

within by immutable laws preserving a synthetic unity of the cosmos or the universe as a whole in all its three states of origination preservation and destruction. This eternal doctrine of unity is known as Advaita or non-dual monism which is stated in the Chhandogya Upanishad as follows — "Before, Oh Child all this universe was only Sat (Being) having its existence in the Absolute Being one only and without a second" "All this universe is verily Brahman"¹ This doctrine establishes the unity of the whole universe as having its true spiritual basis in Brahman or Atman.

4 Absolute Idealism & unity of the world

Absolute idealism or monism should not be confounded with the doctrine of pan-theism which holds good only in the empiric world of reality. Pantheism does not give the whole metaphysical truth. Pantheism seeks to establish an identity between the Supreme Being and the Universe of nature including the migrating souls with their names and forms as seen functioning in the world. It obliterates all distinction between spirit and matter, cause and effect and subject and object of the empiric world. The real identity however according to the Advaita doctrine of monism is not between pure spirit and matter in its manifest condition as seen in the world. Pure spirit is always immaterial and it cannot be identified with crude matter which is not real but is effect and a product from mere energy as is now proved by science according to which all matter is made up of innumerable points of electric energy called ions which are surcharged with forces of positive and negative electricity. As this subject relates to the subject of cosmology and the theory of causation I shall deal with it more at length later on. It may be however stated here in short that the doctrine of Advaita really establishes the relation of identity between individual soul and the Supreme soul and the relation of non-separateness between the self and nature, the individual souls as well as matter having their being in pure spirit thus preserving the unity of the world. This ideal relation of identity between the individual soul and the supreme soul was proclaimed by all the Upanishads as typified by the

four Mahavakyas or supreme propositions contained in the four Upanishads viz the Aitareya, the Bṛihadaranyaka, Chhandogya, and the Mandukya Upanishads attached to the four Vedas, Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and the Atharvaveda respectively. These four propositions proclaiming the identity of the individual and the supreme souls are contained in four leading pithy sentences (Maha Vakya) of the above four Upanishads which are quoted below for information of the reader. The pithy sentence of the Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishada runs as "Aham Brahmasmi" which means "I am Brahman"¹. He who realizes such knowledge attains the state of all and unity in the differences of the manifold objects which do not appear to him as separate from or independent of Brahman but simply as Brahman's nature. Thus the sage Vamadeva had attained to the highest stage of self realisation and the knowledge of unity. The pithy sentence of the Chhandogya Upanishad runs as "Tattwamasi" which means "That (i. e. the Supreme soul) thou (i. e. the individual soul) art". The pithy sentence of the Aitareya Upanishad runs as "Prāṇanam Brahman" which means "Brahman is knowledge or consciousness". Lastly the pithy sentence of the Mandukya Upanishad runs as "Ayaṁ Atma Brahma". All these four pithy sentences practically convey the same meaning and reproduce the highest philosophical knowledge taught by the Upanishads viz. that the self of the individual soul is identical with the self of the supreme soul.

The proposition 'That thou art' (tat twam asi) is repeated nine times in the Chhandogya Upanishad and its lesson is brought home by demonstrations, experiments and homely illustrations as taught by the sage Uddalaka to his son Shvetaketu. The boy Shvetaketu on returning home from his tutor after studying all the Vedas for twelve years began to show conceit and arrogance, feeling confident of his knowledge of the Vedas. His father thereupon asked him whether he had learnt from his tutor the reason by which one can hear what was unheard before, perceive what was unperceived before and know what cannot be known. The son expressed his ignorance and his father thereupon

instructed him by giving three illustrations of clay, gold and nail-scissor as to the highest lesson of the unity of the whole world as having its being within the Absolute or the Supreme Being which alone is real and by a knowledge of which everything becomes known. He demonstrated the above truth in the following manner viz. that just as by knowledge of one clod of clay, all objects made of clay become known, the difference or change by name and form being only a name arising from speech, the unity of clay of which all the objects are made and in which they subsist, alone being real. In the same way the unity of the world which has its being in the supreme self and in which it exists is alone real. The father then demonstrates the above truth by apt experiments and parables and teaches Shvetaketu the great lesson "Tat Twam Asi" That (i.e. Supreme soul) thou (i.e. individual soul) art. The above lesson may be taken to reproduce in three words the substance of the teachings contained in all the Upanishads and is the key note of Vedanta. It definitely establishes the doctrine of Absolute idealism and unity of the world as the fundamental conception of the Upanishads by identifying Brahman as the one cosmic principle or self of the universe with Atman as the subjective principle or self of the individual soul. The Chhandogya Upanishad expresses this unity of the world as the cardinal doctrine of all the Upanishads as stated above.¹ The objective universe of names and forms exists as an idea only of the universal spirit which is identical with the spirit or self of the individual soul as abstracted from the organs, mind and senses and which alone is real. Hence all phenomena of names and forms of the world of experience become known when their substrate Brahman which alone is real in its entirety is known as the self of the knower as assured by the Chhandogya Upanishad.² The same Upanishad in the Chapter of Dahnra Vidya³ further teaches the principle that there is present in the heart of man the whole macrocosm together with the universal self. Hence whoever knows the self has absolute freedom. This knowledge unites our self which is consciousness with the universe and gives control of all things from their source,⁴ as nothing exists outside and independent of Atman which is our very self. It is further taught in the

1. (Ch. U 6-2-1) 3-14-1) 2. (Ch. U 6-1).

3 (Chh. U 8-1-6) 4. (B. U 2-4-5)

Chhandogya Upanishad¹ that the goal of all knowledge is Bhuma or infinitude which is illimitable ideation of the universal self within us in all directions and outside which nothing exists. The infinitude of the whole is alone real, and things piecemeal are unreal, by themselves alone as detached from and independent of Brahman. On realising knowledge of this unity, the individual soul wins absolute freedom. There is really no plurality and no becoming which is all an illusion or Maya. All sense of duality or otherness constituting a limit to the self, is repugnant to the teachings of the Upanishads and is censured by them in strong terms as would appear from the following statements:—

“In the mind it should be perceived. Here there is no plurality anywhere. From death to death is he led blindly, who here gazes on a plurality.”² “Change is mere matter of words, a simple name.”³ The later Upanishads teach that the entire universe should be immersed in God.⁴ In the Upanishads referred to last, the Absolute is described as a personal God with whom loving relations are formed by men for purpose of devotion. This led to the development of several theistic schools of philosophy later on.

III. Theology.

Having determined the exact nature of the Absolute or Supreme Being as conceived in the Upanishads philosophically, it would be necessary to consider the theological conception of the Supreme Being in relation to the empiric world of reality. The Supreme Being is viewed from two different standpoints viz metaphysical and theological. From a metaphysical point of view, the Supreme Being is the object of knowledge. He is described impersonally and is realized by intuition. He is attributeless and he transcends all relations of time, space and causation of the phenomenal world. From a theological point of view however, the Supreme Being is conceived as the creator, protector and destroyer of the universe,⁵ as also its Ruler, Governor, and Controller.⁶ The Supreme Being is called God by the theologians and He is

1 (Ch. U. 7-23 to 25). 2 (B. U. 4-1-19). 3. (Ch. U. 6-1-4). 4. (I. U. 1; S. U. 1-7). 5. (Ch. U. 3-14-1 T. U. 3-1.) 6 (B. U. 4-4-22; 3-8-9, 3-7-3 to 23).

worshipped by the devotees as possessing several Divine qualities¹ and as dispensing justice by giving rewards and punishments². We have seen above that the Vedic religion was mostly theological. The Rishis of the Vedic period at first worshipped different deities and they were therefore called polytheistic. But subsequently they attempted to discover one Supreme God and they classified the several deities worshipped by them as comprehended within the unity of the Supreme Being. They made various attempts to achieve a system. As a result, by slow degrees through an intermediate stage of belief in the existence of a deity that there was ultimately one Supreme Being who was the source of the universe and its ruler. He also ruled the several gods worshipped by men. From the numerous cosmic hymns in the Rig Veda it appears that their first conception of the Supreme God was of a creator who was called Prajapati (ruler of the world) though they gave him different names. Their idea of the Supreme God was not however totally free from anthropomorphism and in the famous Purusha Sukta³ they described the Supreme Being as a person having 1000 heads, 1000 eyes and 1000 feet. In some of the hymns of the Rig Veda we also trace the first germs of the Doctrine of pluralism and monism as in the Purusha Sukta and the hymn composed by Dirghatama. These Doctrines were developed in their full form in the Upanishads. I have stated above that search after one Supreme God resulted in the conception of Prajapati. But Prajapati was shortly displaced in the Upanishads by the Brahman and Atman who occupied his place. The most definite expression for the object of man's search was thus found in the conception of Brahman and Atman. The terms Brahman and Atman both denoted the first principle of the universe and were used synonymously. Both expressions however were too indefinite to satisfy the needs of worship of ordinary persons of the world who had not attained to a high level of spiritual culture.

(1) Search for God of worship

Various attempts were therefore made to make the Supreme Being an object of worship by ascribing to it attributes borrowed

1. (Ch. U. 3.14-1) 2. (Ka. U. 3.9). 3. R. V. X-90

from the empiric world. These attempts were however imperfect. Thus we find from the dialogue between the proud Brahmin Balaki and King Ajatasatru¹ how the latter confuted the false definitions of God given by Balaki who pretended to know the essential nature of Brahman and defined Brahman as the purusha (soul) in the Sun, moon, lightening, ether, wind, fire, water etc. This was pantheistic conception of God which identified Him with the universe but which was imperfect. The King pointed out to Balaki that the Purushas pointed out by the latter occupied a subordinate position in the universe and that the definitions did not express the whole view of the Supreme Divinity. Balaki considered only the immanent aspect of God as manifested in the universe but he took no account of the transcendental aspect of God which was not visible in the world. Similarly it was pointed out by Yajnavalkya to Sakalya² that the definitions given by the latter of the Supreme Being as the highest goal (Parayanam) of man were all one-sided and imperfect and Sakalya had to atone for propounding such false knowledge of God by his death³. Similar unsuccessful attempts at defining the essential nature of the Supreme Being were controverted by Yajnavalkya in the disputations he had with six combatants in the public assembly of learned scholars held by King Janaka, when he vanquished his opponents by advancing most learned and scholarly arguments. Yajnavalkya's said opponents gave 6 definitions of Brahman as speech (vac), vital breath (Prana), eye (chakshu), ear (shrotram), mind (Manas), and heart (hridayam). But Yajnavalkya subjected these definitions to a searching criticism and he pointed out that they were mere supports by means of which the six corresponding attributes were assumed to belong to the Supreme Being. These were only empirical attributes corresponding to the phenomenal forms of experience and did not give the whole nature of the Supreme Being. Another attempt at discovering the real form of worship of the Supreme Being is found in the dialogue between Narada and Sanat-kumara in the Chhandogya Upanishada⁴. In the above dialogue we find that Narada though he was well versed in the knowledge of the sacred Lore of all the Vedas, history, Puranas, logic, art, devotion and several other sciences, yet he manifested profound ignorance of the knowledge of

1. (B.U. 2-1 and K.U. 4), 2. (B.U. 3-9), 3. (B.U. 3-9), 4. (Ch.U. 7-1 to 26).

the Supreme Being as the object of worship whereby the devotee could surmount all the sorrows of the heart. He therefore reverentially approached Sanat-Kumara with a request to impart him instructions about the nature of the Supreme Being to enable him to remove the sorrow. Sanat-Kumara then began his instruction by declaring that the whole of the knowledge that was already acquired by Narada was empiric and a mere name. Then he taught Narada the knowledge of the highest Brahman by leading him to worship it by different names representing different objects of the world of experience advancing in greatness stages by stages successively. The revered teacher thus taught Narada to worship the Supreme Being in the following forms each rising in greatness, by a regular gradation viz. name, water, heat, space, memory, hope, upto Prann or individual soul. Sanat-Kumara then ultimately taught to Narada the highest lesson about the Supreme Being as *Bhuma* i.e. the unlimited which comprehends all and beyond which there exists nothing separate from him. Yet *Bhuma* is identified with *Alinukara* (self-consciousness) and with *Atman* (soul) in us. The above chapter in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* constitutes one of the highest kinds of the Supreme Divinity called the *Bhumin Vidya* whose fruit is emancipation and absolute freedom. The teacher here incidentally admits the possibility of worship of the Supreme Divinity by symbols for ordinary men who were not totally free from empiric conceptions and who were not qualified to have the highest metaphysical knowledge of the essential nature of the Supreme Being. The fruit however of worshipping God in the form of smaller divinities was small. This led to the mode of worship of God by symbols which was called *Pratika Upasana* or idol worship in subsequent times.

(2) *Upasanas or Meditations-Symbol Worship*

This introduces us to the subject of the different modes of *Upasanas* or *Meditations* as conceived in the *Upanishads*. The word *Upasana* is derived from the verb 'As' to sit which with the prefix 'Upa' (towards) means postures for worship and practices for meditation of God. The lowest form of worship prescribed for those who were not initiated for the higher kinds of recognised meditations

was Pratika (symbol) worship. The word Pratika meant the visible face of an invisible object turned towards us. Symbol was understood to be the visible sign of an invisible object. Thus Brahman who was without any form and was invisible was worshipped under some form perceptible to the senses as Life, Space, Moon, Sun, Speech etc.¹ These forms were regarded as the images of Gods and they were understood as symbols representing the highest Brahman. The worshippers of symbols or idols never got the vision of the Supreme Divinity. Their fruit was only limited and of short duration.

(3) Meditations of God with Attributes

There was however a higher kind of meditation of God as endowed with attributes called Saguna Upasana which was allowed as a recognised mode of worship of the highest Divinity in the Upanishads. Thus it is enjoined in the Chhandogya Upanishad that one should meditate on the Supreme Being as creator, ruler and destroyer of this Universe and as a Moral Being in silence.² These modes of worship were always accompanied by a knowledge of Brahman and their fruit was an abode in the Brahma Loka or abode of the conditioned God called Hiranyagarbha to which an access was had after death by the path of Gods called Devayana. The following cognitions (Vidyas) for worship of the supreme Being with attributes were recognised in the different Upanishads as means for approaching the Supreme Divinity viz, (1) The Paryanka Vidya³ (2) Panchagni Vidya⁴ (3) Upakosala Vidya⁵ and (4) Dahara Vidya⁶. For the above Meditations, abode in the Brahma loka by the Devayana or path of the Gods, is mentioned as the reward after death in the above Upanishads. The following cognitions are also mentioned in the Upanishads for the worship of Saguna God. They are (1) Sandilya Vidya⁷ (2) Vaishvanara Vidya⁸ (3) Madhu Vidya⁹ and (4) Shodasha Kala Vidya.¹⁰ As these cognitions are also accompanied by a knowledge of the Supreme Being, the devotee gets the reward of Brahmaloка as fruit by the

1 (Ch. U. 4-10-5, 3-19-1, 7-2-2) 2 (Ch. U. 3-14)

3. (K. U. 1-1 to 7) 4 (Ch. U. 5-3 to 10, B. U. 6-2-9 to 16)

5 (Ch. U. 4-10 to 15). 6 (Ch. U. 8-1 to 6). 7 (Ch. U. 3-14).

8. (Ch. U. 5-11 to 18). 9. (Ch. U. 3-1 to 11, B. U. 2-5) 10. (P. U. 6).

path of Gods although the latter is not mentioned in the Upanishads describing the said cognitions. It is very important to note here that the above modes of worship of God mentioned in the Upanishads were quite different from those of popular worship where the Divinity as the object of worship was considered different from the devotee or the worshipper who was not free from the empirical conception of duality. As however monism was the cardinal doctrine of the Upanishads they denounced all idea of duality as an illusion and as unreal. Duality in worship was censured in rather strong terms. In fact it is stated decidedly in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that "He who worships another divinity (than the Atman or self) and says 'it is another and I am another does not know. Like a beast he is used by the Gods. Therefore, just as many beasts are useful to men, so every individual man is useful to the gods. Now the theft of only one beast is displeasing how much more if of more? Therefore it is not pleasant to the gods that men should have true knowledge."¹ The above modes of worship of God with attributes as prescribed in the Upanishads were therefore always accompanied by knowledge of the spiritual unity of the devotee and the divinity and they were called *Aham-grah Upanasas*. The prayers were in the following forms "Revered divinity I am thyself and thou art myself" "Just as thou art Brahman so I am Brahman"². The conception of God in the above Upanasas or modes of worship was lofty and sublime and was calculated to lead to the practical result of achieving blissful peace by concentration and a gradual moral uplift and elevation of the devotee to the state of Godhead. I shall refer the reader to only one mode of worship known as *Shandilya Vidya* which is contained in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* to give him an idea as to how lofty and sublime were the Vedic meditations contained in the Upanishads. I have quoted below in the foot-note the whole prayer which may be read by the reader³.

1. (B. U 1-4-10) 2. (Ka. U 1-6).

3. Vary this universe is Brahman. In silence one should meditate on him as creator ruler and destroyer of this universe. Now man is formed out of will. According to what his will is in this world he will be when he has departed. Let him then seek (the good) will. Spirit is his substance, life his body, light his form,

(4) **Worship of Atman or Self.**

We have seen that the Upanishads have laid down two modes of worship for the lower and middle classes of persons who were not enlightened for true spiritual knowledge. For the lowest class of persons who desire worldly pleasures, symbol-worship of God with forms was prescribed. The devotee worshipped images of different gods who appear to him endowed with physical forms each capable of fulfilling his desires. The fruit of such worship was however limited and of short duration. But there were persons of a higher type who were more enlightened. For them the Upanishads prescribed various modes of meditation of God with attributes. To these people, the gods who were worshipped appeared not as independent deities but only as manifestations of one Divine power working within and through the said manifestations. The prayers of such persons were always accompanied by knowledge of the Supreme Being. But there was still a higher class of persons who had attained to a higher stage of spiritual culture. For such persons the Upanishads prescribed a third mode of worship of the Supreme Divinity as the Atman or Self of the devotee without attributes, by contemplation of his essential nature both in his transcendental and immanent aspects¹. Thus in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we find that the sage Yajnavalkya has taught to his enlightened wife Maitreyi the true philosophy of the love of Atman, viz. that one loves another not because he loves him as a relation or an object existing separately from him in space but because he loves his own self or Atman in his said relation. The love of Atman

his thoughts truth, and his self infinity. All-effecting, all-wishing, all-smelling, all-tasting, embracing the universe, silent, unperturbed—this is myself in the inner heart, smaller than a kernel of rice, smaller than a grain of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a grain of millet, even than a husked grain of millet, this is myself in the inner heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds. The all-effecting, all-wishing, all-smelling, all-tasting, embracing the universe, silent, unperturbed—this is myself in the inner heart. This is Brahman. When I shall depart from here, I shall enter into it. He who knows this has no doubt. Thus spake Shandilya." This is the well known doctrine of Shandilya in the Chhandogya Upanishad (Ch. U. 3-14)

1. (B. U. 1-4-7).

as universal self teaches us the spiritual significance of universal brotherhood. This is what Yajñavalkya said, "Behold, oh Maitreyi, not for the sake of the Universe, the universe is dear but for the sake of the self the universe is dear. Behold, the self (Atman) is verily to be seen, heard, thought and meditated upon. Behold Oh Maitreyi, by seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing the self, all this universe is comprehended." ¹ The fruit awarded to the above class of persons was the highest. They achieved immediate emancipation or absolute freedom even in this life called Jivanmukti. They have not to wait till the end of life. This was the lesson taught by the sage Yajñavalkya.²

(5) Theism.

Before closing the subject of theology it would be necessary to consider here whether theism formed part of the religion of the Upanishads and what views were held by the seers on the subject. In theism, God is believed and worshipped as a personal Being and as creator of the universe and the embodied souls and their ruler. God as a moral guide regulates the course of works for men which are predestined by Him and have their requital in due season and form. The universe and the individual souls are however treated as distinct from God who is distinguished from them. An opinion prevails that the Upanishads and particularly the older ones, are opposed to ethical theism and are antitheistic in religion. I shall presently point out that this opinion is false. No doubt the fundamental conception of the older Upanishads was mainly idealistic which refused to believe in the reality of the universe as independent of Atman or the universal soul which alone was real and they did not propound the doctrine of theism as stated above, based as it is on the principle of dualism. But a concession was already made by the Upanishads at an early date to the empiric conception of the world of experience which viewed the world as real and the original strict conception of absolute idealism took the shape of pantheism which conceded the relative reality of the world as a phenomenal form of the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being was however regarded as Atman or self and the self of the objective Universe

1. (B. U. 2-4-5), 2. (B. U. 4-4-6, 7)

was considered identical with the subjective self of the individual. The doctrine of pantheism was thus made consistent with that of idealism. The doctrine of Monotheism however in the form in which it is found in some of the later Upanishads had not then developed. But we do find in the old Upanishads ideas similar to theism which formed the basis of several Upanishads or meditations of Saguna Brahman as qualified by certain attributes as in the Shandilya Vidya of the Chhandogya Upanishad already cited by me Verbatim above to which the reader's attention is invited¹. Similarly we find in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad a description of Atman as Antaryami or inner guide of the universe and of mankind,² governor of the universe and protector of living things,³ and qualified by the attribute of prashasana or commanding and regulating the gods of nature as sun and moon⁴ who work in order out of fear of Brahman,⁵ and who are entirely dependent on him.⁶ The above conception about the divine attributes and worship of God with attributes which appertained to the domain of theology as distinguished from metaphysics paved the way of theism, when the doctrine of pantheism was modified by the several theories of creation based on the law of causality as will be pointed out hereafter and different conceptions about the relations between God, man and nature began to be formed later on. A definite advance was made in the same direction in the Katha Upanishad, where we find the supreme soul contrasted with the individual soul as light and shadow⁷. The doctrine of Divine grace was also recognised in the same Upanishad where it is stated "only by the man whom He chooses is He comprehended. To him the Atman reveals his essence"⁸. The doctrine of monotheism was however formulated distinctly in the Svetasvatara Upanishad, in which God, Nature and the individual soul are distinguished from one another⁹. We also find the following verses in the same Upanishad. "Two birds (the supreme and the individual souls), bosom friends of equal name, dwell upon one and the same tree (the body). The one of them (individual soul) enjoys the fruit of the fig-tree, the other (the supreme soul) without eating

1 (Ch. U. 3-14)	2. (B. U. 3-7-3 to 23.)	3. (B. U. 4-422.)
4. (B. U. 3-8-9.)	5. (K. U. 6-3 T. U. 2-8.)	6. (Ke. U. 14-28.)
7. (K. U. 3-1.)	8. (K. U. 2-33.)	9. (S. U. 1-12.)

merely gazes On such tree the deluded soul (individual soul) immersed (in wordly relations) is grieved for want of power But when it sees the other the long worshipped ruler as different (from all wordly relations) and his glory then its grief ceases' ¹ But in this Upanishada we also find traces of idealism and pantheism existing side by side with theism The Katha and Mundaka Upanishads also are theistic. An advance was made in the Isha Upanishad where the Supreme Being is called Isha i.e. lord of the universe It may be mentioned here that theism meets with the wants of the devotee and satisfies his ardent desires to propitiate a personal God, by fervent prayers and supplications so as to induce Him to grace the Devotee by delivering him from sins and unites him in blissful communion with God For this purpose the Upanishads taught various meditations and prayers to God with attributes as stated above The embodied soul was treated as subordinate to God and various injunctions were laid down in the Upanishads enjoining him to worship the Supreme Brahman as imperishable and Antaryami or inner guide and controller of the whole universe The conception of a personal God for devotion and worship in the Upanishads was rather distinguished from that of the theists It was never inconsistent with the idealism as taught in the Upanishads It was therefore more subjective than objective as contrasted with that of the theists whose conception of God was more objective The Theism of the West has always shown a greater leaning towards deism and God was ultimately pushed aside altogether outside the universe He has no relations with the world except artificially The doctrine is unsound philosophically From the above discussion one could easily see that the theological conception of God in the Upanishads as the internal ruler of the universe and a moral guide and friend as seen in the several prayers and meditations was better and more philosophical than that of the theists and the charge levelled against the Upanishads that they are opposed to ethical theism and they show a lack of theistic religion is unsustainable and fails to the ground In the Upanishads, we do not find any conflict between theology and metaphysics as seen in the West But they are found to exist side by side with the result that religion has always formed a part and parcel of

philosophy from the earliest times down to this day. I shall point out hereafter in the chapter on Vedanta, how the great scholiast Shankara has reconciled some apparent conflicts of certain passages in the Upanishads so as to deduce one uniform meaning. The theism of the Svetasvatara Upanishad became a popular form of religion and the starting point and source of several schools of theology which arose later on. The Vedic deity Rudra then called Rudra-Siva had risen to great prominence and popularity in the time of the Svetasvatara Upanishad and he became identified with and worshipped as the Atman or Universal self of the Upanishads. The same theistic current thereafter also led to the identification of Atman with another Vedic deity Vishnu who was also slowly rising into greater prominence. Thus arose the two great cults of Shaivas and Vaishnavas which have since been the most popular forms of religion till to day. Several other schools of theology also arose later on of which the most important was the Bhagwad Gita which was a compromise between the idealism of the Upanishads and Sankhya physics and rational theism. In Gita one finds a development of the idea of love and practical faith in a personal God who incarnates himself and takes several bodily shapes from time to time to protect the righteous and destroy the wicked. The Bhagwad Gita in its present form has presented to us non-sectarian theism of a most comprehensive type based on the Upanishad doctrine of idealism with which it is throughout consistent. It is at present one of the most popular and valuable books in the religious literature of the world that has captivated the minds of not only the Indians but also of several eminent scholars of the West. A controversy was started in the scholastic period by certain Vaishnava theologians who started new creeds and cults of their own about the rank and precedence among the impersonal and personal Gods. According to Vallabha, Purushottama or Personal God with divine attributes is superior to the Impersonal Brahman called Akshara or the imperishable. This belief had no basis in the Upanishads nor in the Gita but was the result of only a sectarian bias and prejudice. As a matter of fact, we find it clearly laid down in the Taittiriya Upanishad that, "whoever makes even a particle of distinction in the essential nature of the Supreme Being which is invisible, immaterial, undefinable and unapprehensible, he is sure to be afflicted."¹ In the Gita, Lord Krishna

teaching the Upanishad doctrines, identifies his own essential nature with Atman or the Universal Self of the Upanishads. Thus there is no question of any distinction between the essential nature of the impersonal Supreme Being and the personal God or superiority of the latter over the former in virtue of the cardinal doctrine of nondualism of the Upanishads which has preserved the integrity and solemnity of the Absolute as a whole, and in which there is no duality whatever. As a matter of fact the personal God of the theologians is no other than the impersonal Atman or Self who is worshipped with forms and attributes which are ascribed to him only for purposes of worship.¹

IV Cosmology

(1) Creation of the Universe

I shall now deal with the subject of Cosmology which treats of the problem of creation and the exact relations subsisting between nature and God. Philosophical speculations had already started so far back as the Vedic period as appears from the several cosmogenic hymns of the Rig Veda dealing with the problem of creation. Various attempts were then made to solve the problem of cosmology by discovering the first principle which was the cause of the whole universe. In the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda² creation is explained as an act of sacrifice by the Gods wherein the evolved person who was born from the primordial person was offered as an oblation to the primordial person and from whose several limbs all natural objects, gods, men and animals were created. In the Nasadiya hymn of the Rig Veda,³ creation is described as resulting from the unmanifest waters by the germ of Desire that arose in the mind of the Supreme Being called that one. This idea of creation by desire in the mind of the Supreme Being was worked up more definitely in the Upanishads.⁴ The motive of creation was recognition of the first principle of the universe which at first was more personal as Prajapati and was later on identified with Atman or Soul (universal and individual). The idea then arose that the Primeval Being created the universe and he entered into it as the first born. This was the traditional view of the Vedas which was followed in the Upanishads.

1. (R. Pt. U 1-7) 2. (X-90) 3. (X-129) 4. (B. U 1-4-3 Ch. U 6-2-3, T. U 2-6, A. U 1-1)

Thus we find in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that Brahman or Atman causing the unconditioned universe to become conditioned as names and forms entered into it upto the nails as immanent soul¹ This idea was clearly pantheistic as Brahman is wholly present as itself (Atman) in every living thing.² The cosmic soul Hiranya-garbha or Brahma (Masculine) enters into creation as first born of Brahman (Neuter) Brahma masculine is Cosmic Mahan Atma or the universal subject of knowledge from which arise the principles of finite thought, intellect and mind The world is created from and by Brahman as the web from the spider, and sparks from the fire.⁴ Brahman is the eternal cloaked by empiric reality⁵ The embodied soul according to the Upanishads does not exist previous to the creation by Brahman

(2) Idealism, pantheism and causation.

We have already seen above that the conception of the Upanishads at least of the older ones was absolute idealism, according to which Atman was the sole reality and that there was nothing outside Atman Therefore with the knowledge of Atman, everything is known. From the point of view of the theory of absolute idealism there could be really no creation as there is no universe outside of Atman or universal self Such creation outside of the Atman or universal self was believed to be unreal. But the theory of absolute idealism was not acceptable to those who were of an empiric turn of mind and who asserted that the universe had a reality These persons therefore substituted the theory of pantheism by which the relation of identity was established between Atman and the Universe and the Universe was believed as real as the Atman. The theory of reality of the world was thus reconciled with the idealistic theory of Atman as the sole reality. But even according to pantheistic conception, no creation of the universe was really possible on account of the identity of Atman and universe. The theory of causation was therefore substituted to explain the universe as creation as a concession to the empirical conscious-

1. B. U. 1-4-7, Ch U 6-2-3 and T. U. 2-6.

2. B. U. 2-1-16, Ch U. 6-8 to 16 3. K. U. 3-10,

4. B. U. 2-1-20, S. U. 6-10, M. U. 1-1-7, 2-1-1

5. B. U. 1-6-3, cf 1-4-7, 2-4-12, Ch. U. 3-14-1, 6-13

ness which looked upon the world as real. These persons were not satisfied with the relation of identity between the Atman and the universe and they formulated a new theory of causation, whereby they explained how the universe was created by Atman as an effect from a cause and a causal relation was established between the Atman as the first cause and the universe as its effect. To make the theory of causation consistent with the fundamental idealistic view, which was based on the traditional view of the Rig-Veda, the Upanishads taught a further lesson, that as soon as the universe was created by Atman (or universal self) as the first cause the latter entered into it simultaneously as stated in the several passages cited above. The Upanishads recognised the causal theory of creation and looked upon creation as an evolution of the names and forms of the manifold universe.¹ The evolution of the universe however was self evolution of the Atman who entered into it immediately on creating it, to become the manifold universe of names and forms.* By teaching the essential identity of all the phenomena of nature with the Atman, the theory of causation was made consistent with the doctrine of pan-theism. This was however only a concession to the empiric point of view in the world of experience, and was not a satisfactory solution of the problem of the universe from a philosophical point of view which looked upon absolute idealism alone as the truth.

(3) Theories of Triple and Quintuple Creation.

We find in the Upanishads discrepant cosmogenic theories one differing from the other as regards the order of creation. Thus there are two theories known as the theories of triple and quintuple creation of the elements. The theory of triple creation was first formulated in the Chhandogya Upanishad.² According to this theory three chief elements viz. heat (fire) water and food (earth) were successively created by the suprema deity one from the other, in the above order after which each was bleaded with part of the others. The theory of quintuple creation was adopted later on in the Taittiriya and Prama Upanishads.³ According to this theory, the elements were five in number viz. Ether wind, heat, water and

1. B. U 1-4-15 2. T. U 2-6-7 3. Ch. U 6-2. 4. T. U 2-1, P. U 4-8.

food (earth) These were created from the first principle successively one from the other in the above order. It will be seen that by this theory two more elements of ether and wind were added to the old list of three. A great advance on the old theory was made by the addition of two more elements and the elements became five in number. This number was assumed by all the later philosophers of India. These five elements were of 2 kinds, the fine ones, and the gross ones, the latter being derived from the former. The great scholiast Shankara in his commentary on Braham Sutras has reconciled the above discrepant theories of creation by pointing out that the triple creation should be read in conjunction with the quintuple creation and he has stated as his opinion that from Atman or Self first arises ether and then wind, fire, water and earth successively one from the other and this process is reversed on the dissolution of the universe. With the above qualification, Shankara follows the triple theory of creation laid down in the Chhandogya Upanishad and not the Quintuple theory.

(4) Destruction of the Universe.

Though we find numerous cosmogenies regarding the creation of the universe in the Upanishads based on the traditional view laid down in the Vedas, we find a lack especially in the older Upanishads of any theory regarding the periodical destructions of the universe as a whole as believed in subsequent times. A collective destruction of the universe as a whole is nowhere mentioned in the Upanishads. Universal dissolution appears for the first time in the Svetasvatara Upanishad.¹ We find in the older Upanishads only the idea of individual destruction and return into Brahman.² In the later Vedanta the theory of periodical cataclysms of the Universe is formulated as based on the old Text of the Rig Veda³ which means " the creator created the sun and the moon in the same manner as he had created them in the former cycle. " But the meaning of the Text is doubtful.

Again and again the universe is created and after a time dissolved again to be created. The cycle of births and deaths is

1. (S. U. 3-2, 4-1, 4-11) 2. (B. U. 1-2-1, 1-5-3, K. U. 2-25; Ch. U. 1-9-1; T. U. 3-1; M. U. 1-1-7, 20-1-1, Ma. U. 1-6. 3. R. V. 190-3,

without beginning and without end. The theory gave a great impetus to the doctrine of recompense. The doctrine of dissolution of the universe as a whole is connected with that of recompense as shown in the Srotasvatara Upanishad. It is likely that the original motive for the above doctrine lay in the wish to maintain the traditional doctrine of creation side by side with the later doctrine of recompense.

(5) The Doctrine of Maya or Unreality of the Universe

I shall now deal with the doctrine of unreality of the world as appears in the Upanishads, in connection with the subject of cosmology or creation of the universe. The doctrine of unreality of the world follows as a corollary from the idealistic philosophy of monism contained in the Upanishads. This idea is not new. Even eminent philosophers of the West have shared the same views from time to time. Thus the well-known Greek philosopher Plato believed the world of empirical reality as mere ideas which alone existed objectively. The philosopher Parmenides belonging to the neo-Platonist school also held a similar view and he asserted the empirical reality to be a mere show of puppets. The famous German philosopher Kant also came to the same conclusion and he declared that the whole universe as we know it is only an appearance and not reality. The English philosopher Bradley was also of the same view. Even the great poet Shakespeare considers this life as a dream. The fountain source of the above doctrine is to be found in the Upanishads which teach us that the universe of names and forms as we see them is not the Atman or universal self but mere maya or illusion giving a false and imperfect view of things. From the use of the word Maya in the above sense in the later Upanishads e.g. the Srotasvatara Upanishad,¹ a theory has been propounded by some based on the false opinion of Mr. Colebrook in his essay on Vedanta read before a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1827, that the theory of Maya or unreality of the world was not recognised by the older Texts of the Upanishads but that it was a modern invention and was added from without in the scholastic period by the renowned scholast Shankaracharya and his great preceptor Gaudapada Acharya. Mr. Gough however in his philosophy

of the Upanishads advancing very cogent and unassailable arguments, in a very learned and able disquisition covering about 25 pages, has pronounced the following opinion "The tenet of Maya is no modern invention The thought if not word, is everywhere present in the Upanishads as an inseparable element of the Upanishads The doctrine is more explicit in systematised Vedanta. The distinction between earlier and later Vedanta is nugatory. There has been no addition to the system from without but only a development from within There is no graft but only growth " Professor Paul Deussen who was also a critical scholar of the Upanishads and the Vedanta has expressed the same opinion and stated that "the older the texts of the Upanishads are, the more uncompromisingly and expressly do they maintain this illusory character of the world of experience "

The germs of the doctrine of Maya or the unreality of the world are traced so far back as the Rig Veda where it is said "Ekam Sad Vipraha Bahudha Vadanti.—The Rishi says that the learned give many names to that which is only one"¹ According to this verse the plurality of the phenomenal world of space, time and causation is a mere matter of words only and that unity alone is real. Thus the plurality of the manifold world is not real, but unity alone is real. This idea is repeated in the Nasadiya hymn of the Rig Veda "That one only breathed windless by its own power; the one beside which there was no other".² The above idea of absolute idealism which denies the existence of the manifold universe outside of the Atman which alone is real, was developed more distinctly in the Upanishads. The idealism of the Upanishads is connected with the name of the sage Yajnavalkya who taught as the cardinal doctrine of philosophy the following principles viz that "Atman or universal self alone was real and that he was the knowing subject within us and the sustainer of the whole universe. All was dear on account of Atman only, That Atman was the sole object of all philosophic inquiry and knowledge. Any thing beside him and independent of him was unreal and was the cause of misery"³ The Chhandogya Upanishada also develops the same

1. (R.V. 164). 2. (R V X. 129). 3. (B.U. 2-4-52, 2-4-14, 1-4-3, 7; 3-7-23;)

idea and definitely propounds the theory of the unreality of the universe as dualism and dependent of Atman. The same Upanishad teaches the doctrine of non-dual monism as would appear from the following extract therefrom —

"Tat satam, what universe existed before as Sat, i.e. Supreme Being, one only, without a second. That all the natural objects of the phenomenal world, sun, moon, lightning etc. are no more self-subsistent, themselves apart from the substrate or the highest divinity of the self power. As such they are unreal and they do not exist on their own account. They constitute mere names having nominal existence only. They are modifications of space only."¹ The clearly stated intention sets out the doctrine that the manifold world of names and forms as seen by our senses is unreal when viewed as apart from or dependent of Atman or the supreme self within us, which alone is real. The same idea is further repeated in the Taittiriya Upanishad which teaches that "The world of empirical reality is so called by men"² meaning thereby that it is real only for worldly purposes but not absolutely. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad there is an emphatic denial of plurality as would appear from the following assertion: "By the mind only is he to be seen. Here there is no plurality, whoever sees plurality in him proceeds from death to death."³ The doctrine of Maya or unreality of the world is further formulated in express terms in the Svetasvatara Upanishad, as follows: "One should know nature to be Maya or Illusion and the controller of nature as the Lord."⁴ The Mandukya Upanishad also describes the Atman as effacing the entire universe, calm, blissful and free from duality.⁵ From the numerous quotations cited above, the reader can at once see that the doctrine of unreality of the world was the cardinal doctrine of the Upanishads and that it was not a modern innovation. Mr. Gough in his Philosophy of the Upanishads has stated that "The doctrine of Maya or the unreality of the duality of subject and object and the unreality of the plurality of souls and their environments is the very life of the Primitive Indian philosophy and Mr. Colebrook was mistaken in denying its primitive antiquity."

1. (Ch.U. 6-2-1 6-3 6-4). 2. (TU 2-6) 3. (BU 4 + 10) 4. (S.U 4-10)

It may be however made clear that by the doctrine of Maya or Unreality of the world, it should not be understood that the empiric world of reality has no existence at all in fact or that it is a mere phantom or that it is in our imagination only as in the case of the son of a barren woman, horns of a hare or a skyflower. The Upanishads have always recognised the relative reality of the phenomenal world of names and forms for which they have always used the expression Satyam, while for the universal self or Atman they have used the word 'Satyasya Satyam' or the essence of reality which is described as immortal. Atman is veiled or concealed by the empiric reality of names and forms¹ There is also another test laid down in the Upanishads to distinguish the real from the unreal. Thus it is stated in the Bhuma Chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishada that "Whatever is whole, illimitable or undivided is real, blissful and immortal while whatever is divided, limited or in parts is unreal, perishable and miserable"² This test seems to have been the basic principle adopted by Yajnavalkya in the following assertion made by him in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad viz. "The Atman entered into this universe upto the finger tips as a knife is hidden in its sheath or the all-sustaining fire in the fire preserving wood. Therefore is he not seen for he is divided"³ The above passage is very instructive as it teaches us that although God entered into this universe of names and forms immediately after manifesting them it is incomplete and therefore it is perishable. This is a sufficient answer to refute the theory propounded by certain modern advocates of lower pantheism belonging to the theistic schools such as Ramanuja Vallabha, Madhva and others who have scoffed at the doctrine of Maya and asserted boldly that the empiric world of names and forms as seen by us is identical with Brahman and is therefore real. The above bold assertion is without any foundation whatever and is directly contradicted by the texts cited above. It would be wrong to assert that whatever is seen or experienced by our senses is also real from a philosophical standpoint as even modern science refuses to make the above bold assertion and it only says modestly that what we see or experience is only the impressions

1. B. U. 1-6-3, 2-1-2, 2-3-6, T. U. 2-6 2 Ch. U. 7-23; 7-24-1;

3. B. U. 1-4-7

created on our minds by the eye and the other senses and it does not vouch for the reality of the knowledge of the essential nature of the said objects¹. Philosophically that only is real which subsists in the same form in all times without undergoing any change in its substance. All phenomenal objects are undergoing a change every moment being subject to the law of constant flux and are not therefore real. Although this world is informed by the divine immanence of God who has entered into it it has only a relative value and it does not give us any idea of the transcendental aspect of God which is unseen nor of the whole truth. It would be therefore presumptuous on the part of any one to identify the gross world of nature consisting of names and forms with the supreme divinity under the shelter of the Upanishad doctrine of Advaita or monism. The very term Advaita suggests that the relation between God and nature is not one of identity as wrongly understood by lower pan-theism. If such a relation was at all intended to be established by the Upanishads they would have used the word 'Aikya' or 'oneness' instead of Advaita. The term Advaita really means only non-dual or non-separate thus suggesting that the world of names and forms is never separate from or independent of God in all the three states of creation preservation and destruction but is ever dependant upon God for its existence. If anyone asserts that the world exists independent of God on its own account, this is an illusion pure and simple and incorrect. This is exemplified most beautifully by the illustration of clay and its products in the Chhandogya Upanishad. It is throughout maintained in the said Upanishad that the various objects made of clay such as pots cups, saucers etc of various designs shapes and colours exist as such only on account of the substrate clay which alone is real and which allows them to function, while the shapes and colours are adventitious and unreal. If you remove the whole stuff of clay of which they are made, they cannot subsist on their own account in the form of bare shapes and colours. Nor the said shapes and colours can be said to be identical with the stuff of clay. In the

1. (See Holleman's Inorganic Chemistry).

same way, the phenomenal world of names and forms cannot subsist on its own account as detached from or independent of God who is the real substrate of this universe nor the names and forms of the manifest world can be identified with or said to be products of the Supreme Being by a process of change or conversion as propounded by Vallabha by the doctrine of Parinama-vada as opposed to the doctrine of Vivarta-vada or Maya-vada propounded by Shankara as God is Akshara (never changing) but is constant or Kutastha nor is He a material being but He is always spiritual and self-conscious Being.¹ The above illustration fully explains the gist of Maya-vada or the illusion theory which was developed later on in its full form by the great scholast Shankara in about the eighth century with all its implications Prof. Hirayanna has rightly observed in his Elements of Indian Philosophy that Shankara has taken particular pains to refute the doctrine of Parinama-vada

(6) Criticism of the theories of Creation.

In dealing with the subject of cosmology a question arises for our consideration whether any creation in the strict sense of the term is possible consistently with the Upanishadic doctrine of idealism. The answer is in the negative, notwithstanding an assertion to the contrary on the part of the theists While discussing the problem of cosmology in the several hymns of Rig Veda, I have stated that it is possible to conceive of three theories of creation viz. (1) That God created the Universe from nothing (2) That He created it from matter existing by itself separately from Him and (3) that He created it from Himself The first theory which is relied on by the theists as their bulwark may be dismissed summarily without any serious consideration as it is absurd on the very face of it The Upanishads have throughout maintained that it is impossible to get something out of nothing as appears from the very interesting discussion in the Chhandogya Upanishad where a *prima facie* assertion of the opponent's view is first set out, that at first there was only Asat i.e. not being, one only without a second, to which the teacher replies in the form of a question 'how can something come out of nothing ?' and says that all this in the beginning was only Sat i.e. Being, one

1. Ch. U 6-1.

only without a second and stating further that the world of names and forms has come out of the one Being only that existed from eternity.¹ In the Taittiriya Upanishad however in the Chapter called Brahmananda Valli, it is taught that all this universe was before, only *Asat* that is non-being.² Now looking to the context and the previous passages it appears that the term *Asat* did not mean nothing but it referred to Brahman or the Supreme Being which is the subject matter of the chapter. The word *Asat* is mentioned there only in contrast with the term *Sat* which in the previous passages means the empiric world of 'so-called reality'. The word *Asat* therefore only means that Brahman was not identical with the empiric world of reality or *Sat* as we see it. The same idea is expressed in the Rigveda where it is stated that in the former age the empiric world of reality came out of the unmanifest Supreme Being.³ Having disposed of the first theory I shall now examine the remaining theories. We have seen above that Advaita or idealistic monism is the cardinal doctrine of the Upanishads and it is not therefore possible to conceive of creation out of matter existing by itself as detached or separated from the Supreme Being which alone is real. This disposes of the second theory. Now remains the last theory of creation according to which God created the universe from Himself. I shall first examine whether the word 'creation' could be at all applied to express the act of bringing into light the empiric world. The word 'creation' really expresses the idea of bringing into light something now which did not exist before. From the passages cited above it will appear that according to the Upanishads the world of names and forms always existed in the Being of the Supreme Self even before this world came to light in the form of creation. It was however then not in a manifest or developed form. It was therefore called *Asat* or unmanifest and came to be as it were identified with the Supreme Being who is always self-subsisting or *Sat*. The term '*Avyākṛta*' was also used sometimes to denote the state of the unmanifest world of names and forms which was about to be evolved elsewhere called *Asat*. Thus it is stated in the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad "All this universe then existed in it (i.e. the Supreme Being) and was unmanifest. It then evolved

1. Ch. U. 6-2.

2. T. U. 2-7.

3. R. V. 10-72.

in the shape of names and forms"¹ Thus the act of creation of the Universe in the Upanishads meant only an evolution or manifestation by the Supreme Being of names and forms which were involved and unmanifest in the Being of the Supreme Self before creation. From an empiric point of view therefore creation by the Supreme Being was only one continuous process of evolution controlled by the Supreme Being which goes on continuously from the unmanifest to the manifest and from the manifest to the unmanifest and so on until it achieves its final purpose by having its Being within the Supreme Self. Subsequently however the problem of cosmology was explained differently by theistic Upanishads like the Svetāsvatara Upanishad and the same attributeless Supreme Being was then conceived as a personal God who by a mysterious power called Parā-shakti created and ruled the phenomenal world of Māyā or illusion controlling its activities mysteriously from within by making one seed, Manifold² He also gives recompense to the embodied souls who are under his control according to their deeds,³ and finally emancipates them by a true spiritual enlightenment.⁴

(7) Esoteric Doctrine of Cosmology.

According to the esoteric doctrine of the Upanishadic philosophy Atman or the universal self is the only reality while the whole phenomenal world of names, forms and plurality has no existence outside of Atman and as such it is Māyā or a mere illusion having only a temporary reality which is transcended ultimately in the being of the Supreme Self by true spiritual enlightenment which is acquired only by intuitional inner experience. It has been proved scientifically after a most critical examination by the great German philosopher Kant, that the three essential elements of the empiric world of reality viz, space, time, and causation are not eternal fundamentals of an objective reality but are merely subjective innate forms of our own intellect. This leads to the conclusion that the phenomenal world extended in space, running on in time and governed by the Law of causality is merely a presentation of mind only and nothing more and that therefore it is a mere illusion, appearance, or shadow and is unreal. The same lesson is taught by the Upanishads

1. (B U. 1-4-7) 2. (S. U. 1-3, 4-10, 6-11. 12) 3. (S U. 6-13) 4. (S. U. 6-16.)

more clearly with an improvement that the empiric world is not the subjective creation of any single individual soul but the creation of one universal self whose essence consists of self consciousness. The Upanishads teach us to ponder deep over the unreality and illusoriness of the phenomenal world and extricate ourselves from its enchanting meshes by deep contemplation of a spaceless, timeless and changeless reality within the calm inner recesses of our heart. In the result one gets intuition and awakening and a flash of true spiritual light which leads to Mukti or emancipation by revelation of the highest self within us in the form of infinite ideals of truth, beauty and goodness.

V Psychology

(1) Individual Soul.

We have seen above that according to the Upanishad teachings the phenomenal world of plurality and relations is an illusion and as such unreal. But there is one object which is always real and that is the universal self in its full splendour which is within us wholly and fully and whose existence cannot be doubted by any one as the doubter even will never doubt his own existence. According to the four Mahāvākyas or the pithy sayings in the Upanishads quoted by me above, the relation between the individual self and the universal self is one of complete identity. This principle of identity was well established in all the older Upanishads by their philosophy of absolute idealism and pantheism. A distinction however subsequently came to be made between the individual and the supreme souls by development of the theory of causality and the doctrine of *thēsm* which necessitated a difference between the embodied soul and the supreme soul. The supreme soul was always free and independent while the embodied soul was in bondage due to ignorance and lack of a true knowledge of the essential nature of self which was concealed by *Māyā* or the mysterious power of the Supreme Being. This distinction between the individual soul and the supreme soul was not however ultimate. It proceeded on the distinction between mind and body and spirit and soul. The individual soul is philosophically no other than the supreme soul nor separate from him and as such he is a pure spirit. But he is distinguished from the

supreme soul by being endowed with body, mind and senses with which he identifies himself in ignorance and believes himself as enjoying sensual pleasures.¹ He soon forgets his divine nature and his ideal unity with the universe and begins to think and act with a sense of aloofness from, and opposition to, the rest of the world with the result that he is in bondage and he believes himself poor, sickly, and unhappy. So long as he identifies himself with body, mind and organs as separated from others and leads a mere animal life of sensuality, he is not free from misery and unhappiness² But the moment he realises his true spiritual unity as the only reality as detached from the temporary relations of the phenomenal world he is free and emancipated

(2) True and false self

The Chhandogya Upanishad has taught us in this connection the discrimination of the true and the false self in the form of an interesting dialogue between Prajāpati and Indra the leader of the gods on the one hand, and with Virochana of the Asuras on the other hand, to which reader's attention is invited. The supreme soul is described as bodiless self distinct from body and mind, which is untouched by the sensations of the worldly pleasures and pains while the individual soul is described as embodied self which is not free from such influences due to a false sense of identification of of his true self which is pure spirit of infinite consciousness with the false self of ego which consists of finite consciousness and his three bodily states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. It has been explained in the above dialogue between Prajāpati and Indra and Virochana that the true spiritual self is not the same as or identical with the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping of the individual soul as wrongly understood by lower pantheism but it is distinct from the three states

(3) Gross, subtle and causal bodies.

This leads us to consider the subject of Rational psychology which treats of the whole psychological apparatus consisting of body, senses etc. The body consists of three parts, gross, subtle and causal. The gross body with its physical organs, the eye, ear, hands,

1. (K. U. 3-4) 2 (Ch. U. 8-12-1.)

feet, etc., is made up of five elements, ether, wind, heat, water and earth. It is resolved on death into the said elements. The subtle body which is called Sukshma Sharīra is made up of the subtle parts of the elements forming the germ of the body. It is accompanied by the whole psychological apparatus consisting of, the senses, the mind and the Breaths. The whole apparatus together with another variable body called Karmāshraya : the substrate of actions accompanies the soul in its migrations of endless births called (Samsāra) until he achieves final emancipation. The subtle body is material but is not seen at the time of death. The senses function through sense organs called Indriyas which are of 2 kinds viz. Jñānendriyas or perceptive faculties and Karmendriyas or faculties of action. The faculties of perception are five in number viz. seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touch. The faculties relating to action are also five in number viz. catching, moving, speaking, generating and evacuating³. These ten Indriyas or faculties are governed by a central faculty called Manas (mind) which is the organ of thought and converts the data of the sense organs into conscious modes of thought and volition⁴. The sense organs are compared to horses drawing the car of the body and mind to the bridle⁵. The breaths (Prānas) as usually given are five viz. (a) Prāna or the wind which at first denoted expiration and later on expiration and inspiration together (b) upāna or the wind which at first denoted inspiration and later on the wind causing evacuation (c) Vyāna or respiratory wind connecting Prāna and Apāna. It maintains life when breathing is momentarily suspended (d) Samāna or the wind which digests food and (e) Udāna or the wind which takes the soul out of the body. The Prānas taken collectively denote the life energy upon which depends the regulation of physical life. Along with the soul the sense organs, mind and breaths, leave the body. They constitute the germ from which the organs of the body again grow at each new birth⁵. To the physical organism which permanently accompanies the soul in its migrations is also attached another body called Karmāshraya or moral substrate

1 (Ch U 8-7 to 12.) 2 (B. U 1-4-7 2 4-11 4 5-12.)

3 (B. U 4-2, B. U 1-5-3 4-1-6) 4 (K U 3-2, 3-3.)

5 (B. U 4-3-12 Ch. U 6-2 P U 3-7 4-2 4-2.)

which is the store of actions collected during life. This moral substrate goes out with the soul, and conditions the future existence of the soul. It determines the form of birth in the next incarnation ¹

(4) The Theory of five sheaths of self.

Closely connected with the three-fold division of the self of an individual soul as physical, psychical, and causal is another five fold division of Ātmans or five purushas. These five divisions of Ātmans or purushas correspond to the divisions of individual souls as physical, psychical and causal which regulate the principles of life, will and knowledge respectively. These five Ātmans are called Annamaya, Prānamaya, Manomaya, Vijnānamaya and Ānandamaya which are manifested both in mankind as well as in nature. These were later on called koshas or sheaths by Shankara. The first four sheaths surround the fifth as the real Kernel which stands for the highest spirit. Stripping off these sheaths one by one and penetrating deeper, one reaches the innermost recess of the essential being of man and nature². The *Annamaya sheath* is formed of food and it represents the material nature of human body with its organs³. Within Annamaya is the *Prānamaya sheath* formed of life breaths.⁴ This corresponds to the principle of natural life upon which depends the activity of the gross actions in man and nature. Within the last mentioned sheath comes the *Manomaya* which is formed of mind or volition⁵. By this, we have to understand the principle of will which directs men and gods to perform selfish actions as Vedic rituals etc. Within the Manomaya Sheath is placed the *Vijnānamaya sheath* formed of knowledge or consciousness, which substitutes knowledge for sacrifice⁶. But it is not free from dualism and it recognises the deity as a separate and independent being. The last and innermost Kernel which is reached on penetrating the above 4 sheaths is the *Ānandamaya Ātman* which consists of bliss⁷. This represents the highest self which is incognitable spirit of infinite peace and joy in which there is no sense of duality or separateness of the world⁸.

1 (B. U. 3-2-13, 1-4-2 to 6, Ch. U. 3-14-1.)

2. (T. U. 2-7) 3. (T. U. 2-1). 4. (T. U. 2-2) 5. (T. U. 2-3).

6. (T. U. 2-4) 7. (T. U. 2-5). 8. (T. U. 2-7).

(5) Waking, dreaming and deep sleep

The Annamaya (food) which is the lowest of the five sheaths mentioned above represents the cosmic gross state or body and it corresponds to the state of waking (*Jāgrat*) in the individual. The next three sheaths viz. the Prāṇamaya (breaths) Manomaya (mind) and the Vijñānamaya (intel_{gence}) constitute together the cosmic subtle body or Sukshma Sharīra which corresponds to the state of dreaming (*Tayāgrat*) in the individual soul. The last Kernel or Ānandamaya (joy) constitutes the cosmic body (causal body) of the Supreme Being of power and knowledge or the Universal Spirit which corresponds to the state of dreamless Sleep (*Prāṇa*) in the individual soul. In the waking state the soul which dwells in the heart rules the whole body and works bodily through the senses and the mind. In dreaming, the soul pervades by means of the veins in the body. In deep sleep the senses and the mind cease their activities and they enter the veins or the pericardium of the heart and thence to the chief breath (mukhya Prāṇa) which continues to act. The soul enters into temporary union with God through the ether of heart. But on waking the temporary union of the soul with God ceases on account of Vāsanās or attachments with the relations of phenomenal world and it commences its individual activities as before.

(6) Triune Unity of the Supreme Self

From the above, one will find that there is only one Supreme Being according to the Upanishads having a triune unity with distinct conceptions of spirit, mind and body, the first being immaterial while the latter two being material. Spirit alone is conscious and real while mind and matter have no self-consciousness. According to the Upanishads mind is material¹. Mind is subjected to spirit and is impersonal. It is passive and receptive. It is a blind force without knowledge. It is the servant of the spirit and a doer only. It is the medium of thought, power, and action. Body is the cosmic stuff which is the manifest form of energy which works through the medium of the causal law of the supreme spirit for a definite purpose. The body is ever changing. Ultimately there is only one universal body, one universal mind.

1. (Ch. U 6 5 4)

and one universal spirit. Matter was formerly divided into about 80 or 90 distinct elements subdivided into atoms which were again broken up and traced back to one root cause consisting of a fine imponderable substance resembling ether. It has now been proved scientifically by spectral analysis that atoms are not final and distinct and they are subdivided into still finer substances which are all derived from one universal final substance as an integration of one mass of potential energy. Every atom is made up of innumerable units of energy all surcharged with electricity, positive and negative called elections which are constantly whirling round so as to annihilate all space. The seers of the Upanishads in their quest after the Absolute penetrated even beyond ether and its source the universal energy and traced a still higher principle called the Supreme Spirit or Ātman from which the whole universe was evolved beginning with ether as the first evolute. The result therefore is that ultimately there is one supreme reality called the Absolute, the self-conscious intelligence or supreme spirit for whom they interchangeably used the terms Brahman or Atman. There were thus not 3 gods but only one God of a triune nature which permeates the soul of the Universe and eternally impregnates it with ideas.

VI. Eschatology.

(1) Immortality of the Soul

The seers of the Upanishads have taken great pains in discovering the state of the soul after death, by what paths it travels, and its Ultimate fate as contrasted with the philosophers of the West who seem to have paid very little attention to the subject of eschatology which is almost neglected by them as unknowable as in the case of Herbert Spencer. Some of the Western philosophers belonging to the materialistic school do not even believe in the doctrine of immortality of the soul. The philosophers of the Upanishads on the other hand were all religiously minded persons and they believed in the doctrine of immortality of the soul as an axiomatic truth. See in this connection the interesting dialogue between Yama and Nachiketas in the Katha Upanishad where Yama anticipates and presages as it were, the view of the modern materialists and atheists that the

soul does not exist after death¹ Soul is not a material object that could be seen by the eyes "He is perceived by the heart, by wisdom and by the mind Those who know this are immortal."² According to the Shvetāśvatara Upanishad the soul is described as "the great spirit always dwelling in the hearts of all"³ and he is identified with the individual soul or puruṣa not larger than a thumb⁴ In essential nature there was no distinction whatever between individual soul and supreme soul in the Upanishads. The seers of the Upanishads after deep meditation and contemplation realised the supreme truth that there was one object in the whole universe which was real beyond doubt and that was Ātman or soul which was the principle of self-conscious intelligence There is one ruler who is the inner self of all and who is eternal"⁵ He cannot be apprehended by the senses or the eye and it is not possible to describe him in positive terms except in the form "that he exists"⁶ The whole universe of names and forms is changing at every moment but spirit or soul is always enduring being untouched and unaffected by the said changes The identity of the individual spirit with the supreme spirit is realised by intuition and self experience Thus a doubter may doubt everything in nature as being illusory but he will never doubt the fact that he exists as propounded by the French philosopher Descartes who is called the father of modern philosophy by his famous maxim *cogito ergo sum* i.e. I think that I exist The same principle was taught in the Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad where it is said "In the beginning this was self alone in the shape of a person (Puruṣa) He first said 'This is I. Therefore he became I' by name Even now if a man is asked his name he first says 'This is I and then pronounces his real name"⁷ I here means Ātman or self-conscious intelligence which constitutes the essential nature of soul whether individual or cosmic and which is eternal and immortal The doctrine of immortality of the soul was further proclaimed in the same Upanishad by Yājñavalkya in his dialogue with Maitreyi by the words "This soul is immortal and by nature it is indestructible

1 (K. U 1-20) 2 (K. U 6-9) 3 (S. U 4-17) 4 (S. U 3-13)
5 (K. U 5-13.) 6 (K. U 6-13.) 7 (B. U 1-4-1)

It is untouched by the objects of the senses " ¹ The Katha Upanishad further teaches that "the soul is neither born nor it dies." ² This however refers only to the pure immaterial spirit. The migrating soul on the other hand is said to be born and to die only with reference to the body and not with reference to the spirit which is identical with the universal spirit. The doctrine of immortality of the soul has its germs in the Vedic period as the Rishis believed that the soul, of the person performing Vedic sacrifices who went to heaven on death was different from his gross body which alone was dissolved on death and not the soul. But the doctrine was established definitely and in its full form in the Upanishad period as stated above.

(2) Transmigration of the soul.

The embodied soul who has no spiritual enlightenment has to whirl round innumerable turns of births called Samsāra to get a requital and recompense for the deeds done by him in a former life until he achieves final emancipation. This doctrine was called the doctrine of transmigration of the souls and it owes its rise in the Brāhmaṇa period when the idea of heaven and hell was first set up definitely. It occupies the foremost place in Indian philosophy and is believed by almost all the schools whether orthodox or heterodox. Even the Jainas believe in this doctrine. The above doctrine is based on very sound and rational principles. It explains the working of the law of cause and effect which governs the whole universe. It is the source of real consolation to all men in their sufferings of life which are the results of their own misdeeds done in the past life. According to this doctrine, every man is born in the world fashioned by himself. Each life with its happiness and sufferings is in exact correspondence with the life led by him in a former birth. In the Rig Veda, we only find a belief of celestial happiness in heaven as reward for good deeds done in this life. There was further a belief in the fathers' world which is akin to heaven and in which deceased persons enjoy happiness in company with Gods as a reward for the good deeds done by them. As regards the fate of the wicked, we are told that they are thrown

into an abyss of bottomless darkness in which demons are to be plunged¹. Professor Deussen is of opinion that the Vedic people had no idea of hell and the horrors thereof as believed in later times and that dark regions then only meant this world in which we live. This is however only a matter of conjecture and nothing definite can be pronounced. In the Brāhmanas however we do find a definite mention of hell and the sufferings of hell as appears from a passage in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa already cited by me in the Vedic period². It is even in the Brāhmana period they had a primitive idea of retribution in the form of punishments in hell in proportion to the wickedness of the actions done by men in this life. From this the idea of a quelling justice was developed later on by degrees as appears from the following Text. "For they lay it (the good and evil) on the scales in yonder world and whichever of the two sinks down that will he follow, when he departs hence, but bewildered by the fire (at the corpse burning) and clouded smoke, he fails to find out his place"³. The doctrine of transmigration by repeated births and deaths in this world, was not however definitely formulated until we come to the Upanishads.

(3) The doctrine of five fires Panchāgni Vidya

The chief texts that set forth the doctrine of transmigration are found in the Brhadāraṇyaka and the Chhāndogya Upanishad in connection with the doctrine of the five fires or *Panchāgni Vidya*⁴. The fullest eschatological scheme is given in the parallel passages in the above two Upanishads. The first half of these sections sets forth the theory that on death the soul goes to heaven in a very fine form occupied in waters and faith which terms correspond to the two ideas of subtle body and works. Then the soul returns from heaven to earthly birth in a very short period being sacrificed by the gods successively to the fires of heaven the atmosphere, earth man and woman.

(4) Devayāna and Pitriyāna or the Paths of Gods and Fathers.

Upto this there is no idea of requital in any world. But further on, a very complicated theory of double requital is expounded

1 (R. V. 10-89-15 10-103-12).

2 (S. B. 11-6-1)

3 (S. B. 11-2-7-33)

4 (B. U. 6-2 Ch. U. 5-3).

viz., in the other world and this world. The souls of the sages who worship Faith as their mortification in the woods (i. e. those who have acquired the saving knowledge) ascend by a series of stages which lead to the sun, the lightning and thence to Brahman the Supreme Light from which they never return to this mortal life. This is the famous *Devayāna* or the path of the gods which leads to Brahmaloka or the abode of Brahman. This path is laid down only for those who worship the Supreme God by the recognised modes of cognition as prescribed in the Upanishads with proper knowledge. There is also another path called *Putrīyāna* or path of the fathers which is prescribed for the souls of those who do pious works in the village but have not won full enlightenment nor have withdrawn from the world and embraced renunciation. This path leads finally to the moon where in the company of the gods they enjoy the full recompense of their good deeds. Thence they pass down to a fresh rebirth on earth through ether, wind, smoke, mist, cloud, rain, vegetation, food and seed successively by stages. This clearly indicates a double retribution, first by enjoyment in the heaven for a limited period and then by a rebirth in this world to have a second requital for the deeds done in the former life.

**(5) The doctrine of transmigration based on
The law of Karma and retribution**

There is also a third path by which the sinners who do not ascend to the moon return from the moon and are reborn on the earth in the forms of base animals or equally degraded races of men. It seems there is a bifurcation of paths from the moon. Some souls of good conduct ascend to the moon by the way of the Fathers and after enjoying the fruits of their good works for a period varying with the amount of the works done by them, they return on the earth to be born again in one of the three higher castes of Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya or Vaisya. But others of bad conduct enter the bodies of *chandālas*, i. e. out-castes and sinners and animals as dogs, pigs etc¹. Here the doctrine of transmigration of souls was distinctly based on the law of retribution or Karma according to which rewards were given for good deeds by giving them a birth in the three higher castes, while punishment was given for bad

1. (Ch. U. 5-10-7)

deeds by giving them a birth in low castes and animals. This idea was carried further by the *Kantha Upanishad* in which it is stated that a man may also assume the form of plants as merited by his actions.¹ In the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* the law of Karma was definitely formulated by one's actions "He whose works are good becomes good, he whose works are evil becomes evil. By holy works, one becomes holy, by evil works evil. Likewise others say a person has the nature of desire. As is his desire so is his reward."² The law of Karma is misunderstood by some who criticise it as based on fatalism and predestined necessity and further say that it leaves no scope to the freedom of the will. This is however far from correct. There is nothing fatalistic in the Law of Karma which only means that those things which the individual sets in motion by his conduct in life must ultimately come back to him. It is only another form of the law of cause and effect. Every action done in life generates a tendency which if once set in motion is bound to objectify into a concrete shape and give its fruit exactly corresponding to the act done. Every man is responsible for the acts done by him and he suffers misery, because he had the ability to choose the right but has failed to adopt the right course. Karma is not fate. It is only a mental law which can be changed by right thinking and right action. The very force that makes one sick and miserable, can make him healthy and happy, by right thinking and by right action. Mrs. Annie Besant has said of the Law of Karma that "it binds the ignorant but frees the wise."

VII Emancipation

(1) Oneness with the Supreme Being

The main object of the vast intellectual activities of the sages of the Upanishads was to seek a restive place of eternal peace and happiness as a means to overcome the fetters and bonds of rebirth in endless succession in this empirical world of miseries and sorrows. The rigid system of the cumbrous ceremonies and rituals of the Vedic sacrifices had outgrown the needs of the times and brought about a natural reaction. A life of quiet contemplation in the quiet

1. (K. U. 5-7) 2. (B. U. 4-4-5)

recesses of the forest far removed from the humdrum of city life was preferred thenceforward to that of sacrifices in the fire. The Vedic conception of emancipation was to secure an eternal abode in the heaven and there enjoy the nectar of celestial happiness in company with the gods. Life in the heaven was believed to be immortal. In the Upanishad period however, there was a sudden change in the above conception of emancipation and it was believed that the abode in the heaven was not eternal and that it did not conduce to true spiritual freedom and immortality. The above idea was expressed in the Chhândogya Upanishad "And as here on earth whatever has been acquired by exertion perishes, so perishes whatever is acquired for the next world by sacrifices and other good actions performed on earth. Those who depart from hence without having discovered the self, and those true desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds"¹ Realisation of Ātman or the true self was considered the only goal and summum bonum of human life which secured true spiritual freedom and happiness. Emancipation was not something to be effected by entry into any particular region as heaven but it was unlimited and eternal. It effected an immediate relief and deliverance of the suffering soul from the bondage of these endless cycles of births in this world of miseries. The idea of emancipation as Amritatva or deathlessness and release from repeated births and deaths was negative. But deliverance from repeated births and the sufferings of the empiric world was not the motive of emancipation in the Upanishads as wrongly understood by some. It was rather the consequence of the doctrine of Idealism and the philosophy of non-dual monism, which was positive and not negative. The doctrine of emancipation is older than that of transmigration as pointed out by Prof. Deussen who has further stated that "Buddhism was the first to transform that which was a mere consequence into a motive and by conceiving emancipation as an escape from the sufferings of existence, to make selfishness, the ultimate mainspring of existence." The conception of emancipation of some of the modern sectarian creeds and cults as an entry into Vankuntha the abode of Vishnu, Kailāsa the abode of Shiva and Goloka the cow settlement and abode of Krishna, seems to be

1. (Ch. U. 8-1-6)

equally selfish. The original motive of emancipation was in the sphere of intellect. Therefore true philosophical knowledge alone constitutes the direct means of emancipation and deliverance from death as appears from the following Text of the Shvetāśvatara Upanishad 'Only he who knows him (the puruṣa) escapes from the kingdom of death by no other road as it is possible to go'¹ The same idea is found in the Chhāndogya and Taittirīya Upanishads as will appear from the following texts 'Who knows the self overcomes grief'² 'He who knows Brahman attains the highest.'³ Emancipation in the Upanishads means the realisation of oneness with the Brahman and with all. The goal of man's Knowledge was to come to Brahman or rather to be Brahman in whose Supreme Self all is included.⁴ Direct knowledge of the Ātman in itself therefore constitutes true emancipation. It consists in enlightenment and intuitive vision of the eternal unity of the thinker's self with Brahman. Once the saving knowledge has been gained the enlightened man gains immortality.⁵ He is no longer under the power of works which are destroyed.⁶ He has everything in himself for he is one with all.⁷ He obtains fearlessness and eternal peace.⁸ He has no desire of the worldly objects.⁹ No joys or sorrows touch him.¹⁰ When his soul has passed off this mortal coil it will be reborn no more.¹¹ It is united for ever with the Absolute Brahman.¹² The above state of emancipation in the form of oneness with God was reached only by abandoning all worldly desires which were obstacles in reaching the final goal.¹³ The empiric world of names and forms was unreal. The principal aim of the seers of the Upanishads was to get away from the unreal to the real as appears from the following prayer in the Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 'Lead me from the unreal to the real from darkness to light and to deathlessness from death.'¹⁴ A criticism is sometimes made against the above view of emancipation that it amounts to a mere abstraction into a bottomless abyss of Void or annihilation. But this is

1. (S. U 6-15) 2. (Ch. U 7-1-3) 3. (T. U 2-1) 4. (M. U 3-1-9)
 5. (Ka. 11-12, M. U 3-2-9) 6. (M. U 2-2-8.) 7. (Ch. U 7-26-2)
 8. (B. U 4-2-4 T. U 2-9) 9. (B. U 4-4-12) 10. (Ch. U 8-13-1)
 11. (Ch. U 6-14-2); 12. (Ch. U 8-12-3, M. U 3-2-9) 13. (B. U 4-4-6)
 14. (B. U 1-3-28.)

contradicted by Mr. Gough in his philosophy of the Upanishads. He says, "It is not empty abstraction in the ecstasy of the Indian. It is positive and self affirming. The last residuum of all abstraction is not non-entity but entity "

(2) Companionship with the Supreme Being

I have pointed out above that the fundamental conception of emancipation especially in the older Upanishads was oneness with the Supreme Being. There are however some other passages in the Upanishads which show that emancipation also consists in uniting with God and acquiring a state of equality and likeness with God.¹ The aspirant seeks companionship with God, and a conscious participation in divine joys and the grandeur and glory of God. This is however on a lower plane and is meant for those who could not rise to the heights of transcendental idealism. We have seen above that the Upanishads enjoined various cognitions and meditations of God, the fruit of which was acquisition of Brahmaloka or the region of conditioned or lower Brahman which was reached by Devayāna or the path of the Gods. A vivid description of the various enjoyments in the Brahma loka is given in a section of the Kaushītaki Upanishad called Paryanka Vidyā.² The idea seems to be similar to that of paradise as conceived in the Vedas. The above conception is inconsistent with the higher metaphysical teachings of the Upanishads, as it clothes the Supreme Being in empirical forms and is not free from the empiric dualism. Thus God becomes an object of knowledge, which, in truth, he is not. He is also not free from relations with several devotees, which is also not correct as the supreme Being is Absolute and free from all relations which are to be seen only in the empiric world. It is stated in the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad that "Where every thing has got its being in the supreme self, who can see whom. .How can he know the knower?"³ This passage clearly means that Ātman or the self as knowing subject cannot be the object of knowledge. From the above empirical view of emancipation, follows another mistaken view that deliverance is first attained fully, only with the dissolution of the body.⁴ According to this view which was

1. (M. U. 3-1-3)

2. (Ka. U. 1-4)

3. (B. U. 2-2-4.)

4. (Ch. U. 3-14-4; 6-14-2 and K. U. 5-1.)

subsequently maintained by Rāmānujachārva who started a new Vaishnava sect in about the eleventh century there can be deliverance only after death (*Uddhṛukti*) but not deliverance during life time (*Jīvanmukti*) which is inconsistent with the view propounded by Ājñavalkya in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanishad according to which "a wise man who is free from all desires can become immortal here in this very life and he enjoys Brahman in this body"¹

(3) Release by Stages (Kramamukti)

A compromise was however effected between the above two conflicting views later on by the theory of Kramamukti or release by stages according to which the souls that ascend to Brahman by the path of the Gods (Devayana) are not yet emancipated as they are still lacking in perfect knowledge. However such souls who are devoted to God do not take rebirth on earth. For such souls there is no return. "But they return eternally to the world of Brahman on attaining perfect knowledge at the end of the Kalpa when that world also is destroyed with the other worlds"²

VIII Ethics of the Upanishads

(1) Moral Virtues

The Upanishads being mainly concerned with the highest problems and eternal truths of philosophy ethics plays but a subordinate part in them. However the subject of ethics is not totally neglected and we do find occasional references to the subject in the Upanishads. Thus it was taught in the Mundaka Upanishad³ "Truth alone conquers not falsehood. By truth is opened the path of the Gods"⁴ In the Taittiriya Upanishad⁵ ten duties are enjoined along with learning and teaching of the Veda, viz. (1) Right dealing (Rita), (2) truthfulness (Satya), (3) asceticism (Tapas), (4) self-restraint (Dama) and (5) tranquility (Shama) and as duties of a householder (6) hospitality (Ātithya) and (7) courtesy (Manushā) and (8) duties to children (Prayā), (9) wives (Prayama) and (10) grandchildren (Prayati). In the Chhāndogya Upanishad⁶ the following

1 (B. U. 4-4-7) 2 (M. U. 1-2-6 & U. 1-11 5-7) 3 (M. U. 3-12-6)
4 (T. U. 1-0) 5 (Ch. U. 3-17) 6 (Ch. U. 1-1-1)

five are declared as rewards for sacrifices, viz. (1) Asceticism (*tapas*) (2) Liberality (*Dānam*) (3) Right dealing (*Ārjavam*), (4) Harmlessness of life (*Ahimsā*) and (5) Truthfulness (*satyavachanam*) In the same Upanishad,¹ the following four vices are condemned viz., (1) theft, (2) drunkenness, (3) murder and (4) adultery. In the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*,² the following virtues are taught, viz., (1) Self-restraint (*Dama*), (2) Liberality (*Dāna*), and (3) Mercy (*Dayā*)

Elsewhere in the same Upanishad,³ the following three virtues are enumerated as means to self realization viz., (1) Sacrifice (*Yajna*) (2) Gift (*Dāna*) and (3) Austerity (*Tapas*).

In most of the Upanishads, high praises have been bestowed on the practice of asceticism (*Tapas*).⁴

(2) Rules of castes and stages of life (*Varnāshrama*)

The institution of the 4 castes or *Varnas* viz. (1) *Brāhman* (priestly class,) (2) *Kshatriya* (warrior class,) (3) *Vaishya* (merchant class) and (4) *Sūdra* or the servant class, was already laid down so far back as the Rig Veda as appears in the *Purusha Sūkta*.⁵ Subsequently in the time of the Upanishads the four castes were firmly established.⁶ In addition to the four castes abovenamed there was also a fifth class called *Pancha Janāhā*, *Nishādas* or *Chandālas*, which included low castes and sinners who lived an unclean and impure life and were beyond the pale of castes and Aryan civilisation. They were the uncivilised aborigines of India.⁷ In the Upanishads, the theory of the *Ashramas* is also seen in course of formation, with a mention of their duties. The said *Āshramas* were four in number viz. (1) The *Brahmacharya* or studentship (2) *Grihastha* or stage of householder (3) *Vānaprastha* or stage of anchorite and (4) *Sanyāsa* or stage of ascetic which enjoined complete renunciation of the world. Of the above four stages of life that of ascetic or *Sanyāsi* which was the fourth one was considered as the highest stage as it brought the highest fruit of realisation of the supreme

1 (Ch U 5-10) 2 (B U 5-2) 3 (B U 4-4-22)

4 (T. U 1-9, Ke 33, S U 1-15, M U 1-2-11, P. U 1-10)

5. (R V X. 90.) 6. (B U 1-4-15.) 7 (B. U 4-4-17, Ch U. 5-10-7.)

self and the bliss of immortality. The ascetics had no fixed home and they wandered about living in caves occupying most of their time in contemplation of God and the problems of philosophy. The theory of Ashramas was developed still further later on in the period of the epics and the Smṛiti period of Dharma śāstras.

(3) Place of ethics in the Upanishadic philosophy

I have already pointed out above that the supreme purpose of life in the Upanishads was realisation of one's true self. This was the highest merit called *Shroyaṣ* which was reached by knowledge alone. The purpose of ethics on the other hand is quite distinct viz. mundane goal called *Preyaṣ* which was reached by moral actions. The two ends are therefore opposed to each other as light and darkness and they cannot coexist.¹ A man had to renounce all actions of worldly good if he wanted to achieve spiritual unity with the Supreme Being. One cannot therefore select both knowledge and action simultaneously as two ends of life as the supreme end of life can be only one. Emancipation was the direct fruit of knowledge only and not of works. The above conflict between knowledge and works was however reconciled in the Upanishads in a very satisfactory manner where the rule was laid down that works (*Karmaṣ*) whether ritualistic, moral or social as enjoined in the *Śrutis* (Revealed Scriptures) were necessary for purification of the mind and were to be performed as means to the end of self-realisation. By constitution, man has an impulsive nature and he is not free from selfish motives in achieving worldly good. He is therefore more guided by impulses of desire for agreeable objects and aversion to disagreeable objects and for gratification of his pleasures. We therefore often find that in seeking selfish gratification of pleasures, he does not hesitate to do injustice and even wilful injury to others. It is therefore impossible to achieve the highest end of life, unless one has purged off all selfish impulses and purified his mind from their evil influences. The Upanishads therefore urge on the performance of unselfish and disinterested works of piety and philanthropy as preliminary means to the supreme end of self

1. (K. U. 2-1 to 5)

realization but not as ends in themselves For an aspirant after self-knowledge, work is preliminary to knowledge Thus it indirectly co-operates with the latter for the same ultimate purpose,¹ and there is no conflict between work and knowledge When a man has controlled his whole lower nature and destroyed all sense of egoism, by leading a high moral life, he becomes qualified for true philosophical knowledge Then there is no need for any objective injunction for works which are superfluous for such a qualified aspirant and he is taught to abandon all works, leading a calm and peaceful life in solitude and devote his whole time in intellectual pursuits for knowledge and contemplation of the Supreme Divine Being which will ultimately lead to self realisation and emancipation as the summum bonum of life.

BOOK II
THE EPIC PERIOD

CHAPTER IV

THE EPIC PHILOSOPHY

I. Introductory

The Epic Period according to Mr Vaidya extends from 3000 B. C. to 300 B. C. the Great War between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas having been fought on the plains of the Kuru - Kshetra in about 3000 B. C. Mr Tilak however assigns to the Mahābhārata War the date of 1500 B. C. The great Epic of the Mahābhārata composed originally by Vyasa narrates the incidents of the great War. The epic of Rāmāyana which was composed by Valmiki similarly narrates the incidents of the life of Shri Rama which preceded the Mahābhārata War by about 800 years. It was however compiled after Mahābhārata. The Mahābhārata epic was re-cast twice after it was first composed by Vyasa. It was first called Bhārata. The second edition was compiled by Vāishampayana who recited it to King Janamejaya making several additions in the original, while the third edition was re-cast between Three to one-hundred B. C. by Saunaka who recited it to Shaunaka in its present amplified form making considerable additions to the previous editions. The Mahābhārata is an encyclopaedia of history, mythology, politics, law, philosophy and theology. It was however considered a Dharma-Shastra or a code of ethics and righteousness belonging to the class of books called Smritis. The authority of both the epics as narrating history is recognised in the Upanishads in which history along with Purāṇas is described as the fifth Veda. Sāyana in his commentary on the black Yajurveda says that the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas were designed to teach the law of duty to women and the Sudras who were disqualified from studying the Vedas. The Mahābhārata seems to have been re-cast by Saunaka purposely making therein considerable additions with long dissertations on Dharma or righteousness with a view to counteract the evil influences of the two atheistic religions of Buddhism and Jainism started by Gautama and Mahā Vira in about the sixth century B. C.

II. The Rāmāyana

(1) The Ethics of the Rāmāyana

The Rāmāyana relates to the period of Tretā age prior to Mahābhārata. It belongs to the ancient period when Vedic sacrifices of worship were largely in vogue. Buddhism was then unknown, and idol worship did not exist. The people observed Āshrama Dharma, i.e. duties relating to the four stages of life as laid down in the Brāhmanas and the Upanishads. Thus Rāma performed his Sandhyā every-day and was proficient in Vedic Mantras and the observance of Vedic rites. The principal mode of worship was by sacrifice. Every contemplation was a sacrifice to God. The Ashwamedha sacrifice was freely performed by the Kshatriyas for getting boundless sovereignty. In short sacrifice was the order of the day. In Rāma's time even women performed sacrifices and the daily Sandhyā or obeisance to the Sun as enjoined by the Vedas. Lovely pictures of the Āshramas of Vishwāmitra, Bharadvāja, Agastya and other Rishis are given in which the pupils residing with their preceptors studied the Vedas and observed the duties laid down for their Āshrama. The people were then divided into two main classes as in the vedic period, viz the Āryans and the Un-Āryans. The Āryans consisted of four castes, viz the Brāhmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Sūdras, while the un-Āryans who were the indigenous aborigines of India called Dasyus, Dāsas, Asūras and Rākshasas were uncivilised and they belonged to no castes. The term Ārya then indicated all that was noble, good and moral. While the term un-Āryan meant what was sinful, base and immoral. In fact the epic of Rāmāyana is a record of the moral ideals then practised by the Āryans as preached by the Vedic religion. The lofty and sublime character of Rāma depicts an ideal King, an ideal husband and ideal son fulfilling his duties towards his subjects, wife and father respectively in a perfect and ideal manner; so also in the character of Sita, Laxman and Bharata, we find ideals of a dutiful wife and dutiful brothers transplanted into actual life. The kingdom of Rāma or *Rāma-Rājya* is proverbial even to-day for happy and just rule. The people were well known for their moral greatness and truthfulness. In India religion was

never separated from morality and moral life was considered essential for advancement in the moral philosophy.

(2) Theology of the Ramayana

The religion in the time of the Ramayana was polytheistic and the people were still worshipping the Vedic deities as Indra, Fire and Sun. Nevertheless, we are coming into prominence as Vishnu who was then called Vāsudeva, the younger brother of Indra, Shiva who was then called Ugrasena, the first prince among the Gods before the start of Ramayana and so forth¹. Besides we find that the following new deities in of whom even non-Vedic were admitted into the Aryan faith were Kumbha, Kartik, Kama, Ganga and Lakshmi. Further certain folk deities like serpents, monkeys, bears and birds were worshipped by the non-Āryan aborigines. Not only in places where the non-Vedic deities were worshipped by the Aryan when they came into contact with the aborigines and there was a mixture of religious beliefs of the non-Āryan with the Aryans but also in the Buddhist period Rama was at first treated only as a great and distinguished hero in the Ramayana. He was found worshipping Vedic deities and performing the daily oblations (Sandhya) to God, Sun and fire sacrifices. He was not an Avatar of Vishnu only subsequently in the Puranic time.

III The Mahabharata

(1) Theology of the Mahabharata

We have seen above that in the time of the Ramayana Vedic religion was still observed by the people who were worshipping Vedic deities. But in the time of the Mahabharata a change had already come in the minds of the public and the learning of the Vedas was being abandoned. Women then did not perform the daily Sandhya and Agnihotra i.e. worship of the sacrificial fire as seen in the Ramayana though these were practised by men. Thus we find from the Mahabharata that Yudhishtira as well as Shri Krishna used to perform Sandhyā and sacrificial worship before the holy Fire. There was however no idol worship in the beginning until rise of Buddhism and Jainism when the orthodox Āryans

imitated their example and erected grand temples for worship of their principal deities as Vishnu, Shiva and others. By the end of the epic period several temples had been erected and the people used to worship idols. Certain non-Vedic deities were also admitted into the fold of the Hindu Pantheon as Skanda, son of God Shiva and Commander-in-chief of his forces, Durgā the goddess of destruction who was invoked by Arjuna to destroy his enemies, and so forth. Pilgrimages to holy places of worship were also recognised as very sacred by the end of the epic period. Two cults of Shiva and Vishnu were formed and these deities were worshipped as supreme deities. Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva was also worshipped but only by a few. His worship had not been fully established in the time of the Mahābhārata and his right to be worshipped was even challenged then.

Shiva and Vishnu Cults.

By the end of the Upanishad period, monotheism was getting into popular favour more and more in place of the dry idealistic philosophy of the Upanishads. In the Upanishads different Vedic deities were looked upon as manifestations of one Supreme all-pervading eternal God with whom ultimately Shiva-Rudra and Vishnu came to be identified for purposes of worship. These were the two main Gods who were raised to the position of the highest dignity. All other gods including even the Vedic deities Indra and Prajāpati who were once supreme fell into the background. We find practically only two cults of worship viz. of Shiva and Vishnu who were most popular. Largest number of temples was erected for their worship.

The Indian Trinity (*Tri-mūrti*)

The idea of the well-known *Tri-mūrti* or Indian Trinity of Brahmā, Vishnu and Maheshva constituting only one Supreme God with three distinct functions of creation, preservation, and destruction seems to have originated in the time of the Mahābhārata. *Brahmā* was the Deity of creation, *Vishnu* of preservation and *Shiva* of destruction. In the other nations following the religion of monotheism one and the same Supreme Deity is the object of love as well as fear. But in India one Deity is the object of love

as Vishnu while another Deity is the object of fear as Rudra. Both these deities however were not distinct but they had their unity in the Trimurti having three aspects as mentioned above. Brahmā or Prajapati the creator of the Universe who had once acquired a high position in the Brahmanas fell into the background in the Epics and was totally eclipsed by the two overpowering deities Shiva and Vishnu. Brahmā the creator is not worshipped even to-day in the whole of India there being no temples specially raised for him except one at Puskar. It may be remarked that although Vyasa the author of the Mahābhārata had a predilection for Vishnu and Krishna, the latter being subsequently identified with Vishnu as the Supreme Deity we find both the above cults of popular worship reconciled without any antagonism between them as in some of the bigoted sects of the present day. As a matter of fact in the Mahābhārata both Shiva and Vishnu are equally praised. A thousand names (Sahasra-nama) were given to each of them in the Mahābhārata.

Shiva

We are told by Vyāsa that Arjuna by propitiating God Shiva by austere mortifications in the forest had obtained certain divine missiles called Pashupati Astra which enabled him to destroy his enemies. We also find in the Mahābhārata another account of Krishna entering on a long course of austerities for procuring a son to Jāmbuwantī one of his wives by propitiating God Shiva at the end of which God Shiva appeared before him with his consort Umā and conferred upon him the desired boon and Krishna had a son as desired by him. Vishnu was then the only rival of God Shiva. Vishnu was a beneficent God who was the object of Love. He was getting more and more into popular favour. Shiva on the other hand was a malevolent God, and the object of dread and fear. He was much feared by the devotees as a terrible God who would cause destruction and injury unless he was propitiated and supplicated by prayers and offerings. Shiva was also a beneficent God and he was therefore called Mahādeva on account his double powers. He was generous and bountiful and would spare nothing when he was propitiated. Therefore he has obtained the greatest popularity in India till to-day. He is also represented as a Yogi absorbed in deep contemplation. Rudra-Shiva was a Vedic Deity and was wor-

shipped in the Rig-Veda not only as a malevolent God but also as a beneficent God. He was believed to cure diseases as possessing healing powers and was considered the best physician¹. An attempt is made by some Vaishnavas who are opposed to the cult of Shiva to prove that the idea of Shiva was borrowed from the Un-Āryans. But this is not correct as will be presently pointed out by me. The worship of Rudra was undoubtedly very old being traced so far back as the Rig-Veda. The character of Rudra appears in a more developed form in the S'hata-Rudrīya litanies which are even now performed by the orthodox Brāhmins all over India. Sir Rāmakrishna Bhāndārkaia says about the worship of Rudra as follows — "God Rudra attained to the whole Majesty of the God-head by the time of the Yajur-Veda and Atharva-Veda"². Even in the Rig-Veda he is raised to supreme power' as appears from one of the most excellent prayers offered to him.³ "It is on this majestic form of the God that the theosophic speculations of Shvetāshvataia Upanishad are based." According to Sir Bhāndārkaia "The Shvetāshvataia Upanishad stands at the door of the Bhakti-School (devotion) and pours its loving adoration on Rudra-Shiva instead of on Vāsudeva-Kṛishna as the Bhagwad Gītā did in later times when the Bhakti doctrine was in full swing. ... In the age in which the Shvetāshvataia Upanishad was composed Rudra-Shiva was alone in the field as the Supreme God and the germs of Bhakti or love were directed towards him. .. Rudra-Shiva was a deity whose worship was common to all the Āryans and who was at first not a sectarian God. He was in charge of the field before Vaishnava or Vāsudevīc Deities came in to contest his supremacy." In Shaivism we also find the worship of *Shivalinga* or *phallus* which is even at present the popular form of worship. By the end of the epic period Linga (i. e. phallus) worship was adopted by the higher classes as appears from the Upamanyu discourse in the Mahābhārata. It seems to have crept in gradually among the Āryan people by closer communication with the uncivilised tribes as workmen, potters, cart-makers, carpenters and Nishādas who were worshipping their own peculiar gods, and who identified

1. (R. V. 1-43-4, 2-33-4) 2. (T. S. 4-5-1, V. S. Ch. 18).

3. (R. V. 1-114-8).

them with the Āryan Rudra. In the Ṛig-Veda, Shishna Devaha or worshippers of *phallus* are represented as enemies of the Āryans who disturbed their holy rites. Possibly the Shishna Devahā or *phallus* worshippers were the uncivilised non-Āryan aborigines of India who worshipped the *phallus*. It appears from the white Yajur-Veda that Rudra-Shiva had a close connection with stragglers in the forests with Viatyas who were outside the Āryan community and with the wild tribes of the Nishādas, who were all worshipping their own deities which seem to have been amalgamated with Rudra the Vedic deity. It is therefore not unlikely that the ordinary people who were not learned and who came into closer touch and connection with the uncivilised aborigines for trade and other purposes may have borrowed *phallus* worship from them just as they borrowed from them several other elements as worship of serpent and other non-Vedic deities. The learned classes however as the Brahmins and Kshatriyas seem to have preserved the worship of the Vedic deity Rudra in the old form as appears from the images of Śiva as referred to in the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali about 150 B.C. and in which there is no mention of *phallus* worship which seems to have been accepted only later on by the higher classes. In any event the Āryans worshipped the Vedic deity in the form of *phallus* as symbol of Rudra with purely Vedic conceptions. In course of time Rudra became the national God of India who was worshipped by all whether Āryans or un-Āryans without any sectarianism which was acquired only in later times by way of imitation of the new sects and creeds started by the Vaishnavas who set up God Vishnu and his incarnation Kṛṣṇa as their Supreme Deity.

Vishnu

Vishnu is a Vedic deity who occupies a subordinate place in the Ṛig-Veda. However he is well known for his three strides by which he measures the universe. His first two steps can be discerned by men but not the third one which was his highest place in the heaven (*paramam padam*) where there is a well of honey and there the gods rejoice. Vishnu was called in the Vedic period Upendra i.e. younger brother of Indra and his helper. However Vishnu began to rise in importance in the time of the Brahmanas while during

the Epic and Purāṇic periods he rose to the rank of the Supreme Deity. He is described as having four arms carrying four implements viz. conch, disc, mace and lotus. He was revered for the third step or the mysterious highest abode (Paramam padam) beyond our vision. In the Katha Upanishad the highest abode of Vishnu is described as the final goal and the abode of eternal bliss. Thereafter Vishnu became a household God. Vishnu's celestial abode of highest happiness was Vaikuntha where his devotees participate divine joys in company with Vishnu, the corresponding heaven of Shiva being Kailāsa and that of Kṛishna being called Goloka where the devotees of the respective deities got a permanent resting place. In the Epic time Vishnu was at first identified with Vāsudeva which was the name of the supreme deity in the time of Pāṇini, (800 B. C.), and then with Nārāyaṇa who was the cosmic and philosophical god. In the Mahābhārata, Nārāyaṇa figures as the supreme god in connection with the creation of the Universe. Mythologically, he is represented as lying on the body of the huge serpent called Shesha in the ocean of milk. He was the object of worship. The heaven of this Nārāyaṇa was the S'vetadvīpa or white island. Vishnu is well known for his Avatāras or incarnations in human or animal forms. In the Mahābhārata, only six Avatāras are given viz. (1) the boar (Varāha), (2) the man-lion (Narasimha), (3) the dwarf (Vāmana), (4) Rāma-Parasurāma, (5) Rāma, the hero of Rāmāyana and (6) Kṛishna called Vāsudeva Kṛishna. Then four more incarnations were added thus making the incarnations in all ten, viz. (7) Hamsa (Swan), (8) Kūrma (tortoise), (9) Matsya (fish) and (10) Kalki as the last. In the Bhāgwat Purāṇa, there is a slight change and Gautama Buddha who founded a new religion is mentioned as an Avtāra of Vishnu. Besides there is another list of 24 Avtāras of Vishnu given therein.

Rāma.

It may be mentioned that there is a third cult known as the cult of Rāma which exists to-day over a pretty wide area. Rāma the hero of the Rāmāyana was considered as an incarnation of Vishnu. But this was long after the time of Rāmāyana in the Purāṇic times.

Kṛishna.

The Vaishnavas look upon Mahābhārata as one of their holy scriptures and it is held by them in great reverence particularly on

account of the inclusion therein of the Bhagwad Gītā which is one of the most valuable jewels of the Bhārata and has obtained the greatest popularity till to-day by the monotheistic religion taught therein Vyāsa the author of the Mahābhārata was a great admirer and worshipper of Vishnu as appears from the very first verse of invocation therein God Nārāyaṇa is invoked and he is also identified with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa worship was however in its infancy when Vyāsa wrote the original epic Vyāsa was however free from the modern sectarianism and he expressed his sentiments without any bias. Vaiṣṇampāyana seems to be a more pronounced follower of the Vaiṣṇavite creed than Vyāsa. The thousand names of Viṣṇu (Sahasra nama) are attributed to him. The Vaiṣṇavas recognise the Mahābhārata and the Pancharātra a work of their sect as of the same sanctity as the Vedas. The Kṛṣṇa of Mathura gathered strength in course of time. Kṛṣṇa-Vasudeva worship was fully established in the time of Megasthenes (third century B. C.) But the worship of Śhiva was also established firmly in the days of Megasthenes equally with that of Viṣṇu.

Sauti the author of the third recast edition of the Mahābhārata introduced therein several episodes in glorification of Śhiva, at a time when he had the onerous task of defending the whole of the orthodox religion as it then existed against the attack of Buddhism. The Mahābhārata of Sauti was distinctly non-sectarian unlike that of Vaiṣṇampāyana which was clearly Vaiṣṇavite. That is the reason why the Mahābhārata is valued as the most sacred book even to-day by Hindus of all sects and creeds. Mr. Vaidya rightly observes "it is this unifying spirit which is the charm of this vast work from a philosophic point of view." Sauti made several additions in the Bhārata glorifying Śhiva as a Supreme Deity in the mouth of Kṛṣṇa and praising Goddess Durgā, God Sun and Kartikeya as different manifestations of the Supreme Being with the object of unifying the diverse sects that existed at the time. The Mahābhārata as it is cannot therefore be looked upon as Vaiṣṇavite though it was so in the beginning. The Vaiṣṇavite element began to increase in course of time.

(2) The Pāncharātra or Bhāgwat System.

The Pāncharātra or Bhāgwat system formed the Vaishnavism of later times. It is known as the Ekāntika or monotheistic religion having Bhakti or devotion to God as its chief element. It is also called Sātvat religion as it was followed by the tribe of Sātvatas. The Pāncharātra system consisted of the worship of Vāsudeva as the supreme deity in four forms or Vyūhas, viz (1) Vāsudeva the supreme soul or creator, (2) Sankarshana which was evolved from Vāsudeva, (3) Pradyumna which was evolved from Sankarshana, and (4) Aniruddha which was evolved from Pradyumna. These forms correspond to (1) Supreme soul, (2) Individual soul, (3) mind, and (4) Ahankāra or self-consciousness. The Ekāntika or monotheistic religion of the Bhāgwatas was revealed by Nārāyaṇa to Nārada in the white island (Swetadwīpa) where Nārada had gone from Badarikāśrama. The chief deity is the god of gods who is also called Hari. He is not seen by one who follows the sacrificial mode of worship nor by those who perform long austerities but is seen by one who worships him by devotion. This religion was associated with Ahimsa or non-slaughter of animals. It is opposed to the Vedic religion of sacrifices and has created a reform therein like Buddhism and Jainism whose founders were dissenters from the Vedic religion. Sometimes one Vyūha or form of the Lord is taught and sometimes two, three or four. Thus the Pāncharātra system is inconsistent by itself. The Pāncharātra doctrine was promulgated by Sandilya who has also composed Bhakti sūtras or Aphorisms of devotion which are based on the above monotheistic religion. It is significant to note that this system is free from the Gopāla Kṛishna element. Rāmānujāchārya believes in the pāncharātra doctrine of four vyūhas. But this is opposed to the Vedāntic doctrine of monism in certain respects and was confuted in the Vedānta Sūtras of Bādaiāyana as interpreted by Shankarāchārya to a certain extent. The Bhāgawata system according to Śrī Bhandārīka must have developed in about the third century B. C. The authorities on which this system was based are the Pāncharātra Samhitas some of which are quoted by Rāmānuja, the most important being the Sātvata Samhitā. There is another book on the Pāncharātra System called the Nārada

Pāṇcharātra which contains the Samhitā called *Jñānāmṛtasūtra*. The glories of Gopala Krishna or the boy Krishna are sung in this book as also of Goloka or the world of cows which is the heaven in which Krishna dwells and is reached by those who adore him by service through Bhakti (devotion). Bhakti or devotion alone is the highest Moksha or emancipation according to this book. In this book Rādhā is mentioned as the highest of the women whom Krishna loved. Nārada Samhitā seems to be entirely devoted to the advancement of the cult of Krishna of Gokula (the cow settlement) and of his beloved Rādhā now raised to the dignity of his eternal consort. The Vyūhas which form the peculiarity of the Pāṇcharātra school are not mentioned. The creed subsequently started by Vallabhācārya is exactly similar to that set forth in this book. According to Sir Bhāradvāja this Samhitā must have been written a short time before Vallabhācārya about the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Rāmānujās consider this Samhitā to be apocryphal.

(3) Systems of Philosophy in the Mahābhārata

(i) Philosophical episodes in the Mahābhārata.

Unlike the Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata contains several episodes and discussions which throw a flood of light on the philosophical views that were in vogue at the time. These philosophical episodes are scattered all over the vast epic. They are the Bhagavadgītā which contains the essence of the Upanishadic philosophy, the Anugītā, the Moksha Dharma section of the Shānti Parva, the Sanāt sujātya in the Udyoga Parva and the Dharma Vyādha discourse in the Vana Parva.

(ii) Five orthodox systems of philosophy

Most of the schools of philosophy which were started later on had their foundations laid down in the Mahābhārata in the Shāntiparva. The following five systems of philosophy which were studied at the end of the epic period are mentioned in the Mahābhārata viz. Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Pāṇcharātra the Vedas & Vedānta and the Pāśupata. It is mentioned in the Mahābhārata that the Sāṅkhya was taught by Kapila, Yoga by Hiranyagarbha (i.e. Prajapati) which was a suppositious person and not an historical author,

Pāncharātra by Bhagwān himself i.e. Nārāyana, Vedas i.e. Vedānt by Apāntaratamas also called Piāchīngarbha and Pāshupata by Umāpati or Shiva. To reconcile these 5 systems, it is further stated that the same Nārāyana is preached and worshipped by all of them according to different methods. It may be mentioned here that the systems of Nyāya and Vaisheshika Philosophies which were started by Gotama and Kanāda during the epic period are not mentioned by name in the Mahābhārata. Perhaps they represented unorthodox philosophies. As regards the fountain source of the above five schools of philosophy it may be mentioned that the oldest system of philosophy was the Vedānta which is traced so far back as the Rig Veda and the Upanishads. But who the author of the Vedānta was, Apāntaratamas or Piāchīngarbha as mentioned in the Mahābhārata, is not determined. We know that it was Bādarāyana who was the author of the Vedānta sūtras. The name of Apāntaratamas does not appear in the Upanishads. Sāṅkhya is also very old and may be traced to the Upanishads and particularly the Katha, Chhāndogya and Svetāsvatara Upanishads. Yoga is mentioned in the Taittiriya, Svetāsvatara and Katha Upanishads. The aphorisms of Yoga were however composed by Patanjali in about 150 B. C. The Sāṅkhya system in the Mahābhārata was not the classical or atheistical system which arose later on, but it was theistic Sāṅkhya adding one more principle of God to 25 categories of the classical sāṅkhya, thus making the total number 26. As regards the Pāshupata system, it must have grown round the worship of Shiva just as the Pāncharātra philosophy grew round the worship of Vāsudeva, the God of Gods. I have mentioned above the tenets of the Pāncharātra or Bhāgwat system. The tenets of the Pāshupata system appear from the Vedānta sūtras of Bādarāyana which refute them along with other systems. We also get an idea of their tenets on referring to the Sarva Darsana Samgraha composed by Mādhava in about the fourteenth century A. D.

(iii) Unorthodox and atheistical systems.

In the Mahābhārata, we find immense speculations about various philosophical problems touching the nature and relations of God, nature and man and various schools and sects which carried on the above discussions were found as stated above. Philosophical speculation

had already begun in the Upanishads and the same was continued in the period of the Mahābhārata to the length of even denying the existence of God. These latter ideas ultimately gave rise to atheistic schools of Charvaka, the Sāṅkhya school of Kapila and the two heterodox systems of philosophy known as Buddhism and Jainism which were founded by Gautam Buddha and Mahāvīra respectively in the sixth century B C. The Panchashukha episode in the Shāntiparva consisting of a dialogue between Janaka Janadeva and Panchashukha who was a follower of Kapila gives us an idea of the views of the atheists who believed that life was but an attribute of the combination of elements. Panchashukha refutes the arguments of the atheists.

(iv) Theistic Sāṅkhya.

The Sāṅkhyas believe two ultimate principles viz. Prakṛti (nature) and Puruṣa (Soul) which are eternal distinct and ever opposed to each other. There are 23 evolutes from Prakṛti which brings about the creation of the universe by combination with Puruṣa. Puruṣas are as many as individual souls. There is a twenty sixth principle called God. This is theistic Sāṅkhya. Prakṛti in its primordial condition has three Guṇas or constituents called Satva (Purity), Rajas (energy) and Tamas (darkness) in equilibrium which when disturbed by joining with Puruṣa brings about the creation of the universe. Prakṛti is unconscious and active while Puruṣa or soul is conscious and inactive.

(v) Classical Sāṅkhya.

The doctrines of the Classical Sāṅkhya were formulated for the first time in the Sāṅkhya kārikās which consist of about seventy-two verses which are ascribed to Ishvara Kṛishna who flourished in about 400 A D. This school is atheistical and it does not believe in God. It has only 25 categories as mentioned above without God.

(vi) Precursors of Buddhist & Jain Religions

The speculations in the Upanishads had generated an increasing tendency towards extreme asceticism and renunciation from all worldly activities, which finds its echo in the Mahābhārata. From

the Upanishads we further find that even before the rise of Buddhism, there were many mendicants and ascetics called Śāmanas who were found wandering in the streets begging alms. They were the precursors of the Buddhist and Jaina Monks who had an organised and a regular institution which was started later on by Gautama Buddha and Mahāvīra.

(vii) Dualism and Monism

All the above schools were dualistic with the exception of the Vedānta School which adopted the doctrine of monistic idealism contained in the Upanishads. This school believes that the Supreme Brahman alone is real while the manifold universe is unreal or illusory. This we find from a passage in the Sanat sujatīya dialogue in the Udyogaparva. I shall deal with these schools of philosophy in detail later on when I will expound their doctrines.

(4) Ethics of the Mahabharata.

In the Mahabhārata we find long dissertations and didactic sermons with mythological anecdotes and illustrations on good conduct, Dharma (duty) and virtues such as truth, Ahimsa, honesty, righteousness etc. and particularly on the merits of gifts of various kinds. The Mahabharata represents Dharma as eightfold, viz. sacrifice, learning the Vedis, gifts and penance on the one hand, and truth, restraint of passions, forgiveness and freedom from greed on the other. The first four lead to Pitr Yāna or path of the fathers while the latter to Devayāna or the path of Gods. There are also several passages regarding the duties of Vānāśramas or the four castes and the four orders or stages of life. The doctrine of virtue was a part and parcel of religion in India from the very beginning and hence we find virtue mixed up with religion. The word Dharma was wide enough to include virtue, duty, religion and worship of God. The path of virtue was a stepping stone to the attainment of deity. It was therefore essential to lead the mind of Dharma to purify the mind and make it fit for devotion to deity. The path of duty was a means to the attainment of deity. The path of virtue however was a means to the attainment of deity as the other two paths of duty and religion. It was a means to the attainment of deity as the other two paths of duty and religion. It was a means to the attainment of deity as the other two paths of duty and religion. The Mahā

bhārata makes fine discussions on the subject and gives us an idea of what is the true basis of Dharma. Thus Yudhishthira observes in the *Mahābhārata* "I follow Dharma not because I see any immediate profit from it but from a conviction that virtue is to be followed for its own sake. The vicious man may prosper for a time but virtue's reward is sure to come though now invisible." The knowledge of Dharma is obtained only from *Smritis* and *Dharma śāstras* which being based on *Śruti* (Revelation) are of binding authority. The doctrine of virtue was thus put on a very solid foundation. One is taught to lead a perfect and virtuous life at any cost, resisting all temptations of immediate gain and to suffer all privations and calamities of life as means to reach the ultimate goal of emancipation through devotion to God and wisdom. A highly disciplined life is necessary for a full development of the moral character. The *Mahābhārata* always inculcates this doctrine throughout and concludes with the following memorable verse known as *Bhārata Savitri* —

"Raising up both my arms I cry aloud but no one listens to me. From Virtue results wealth and fulfilment of all desires. Why should not therefore virtue be practised? Virtue should not be abandoned for desire, fear, avarice or even for life's sake. Virtue is eternal, joys and sorrows are fleeting. Soul is eternal but the root cause of its migrations is fleeting."

CHAPTER V

THE BHAGWAD - Gītā

I. Introductory.

The Bhagwad Gītā forms part of the Bhīshma parva of the Mahābhārata. It is the earliest exposition of the Bhakti system or mono-theistic religion which was communicated to Arjuna by Lord Shri Krishna as an Avatāra of Vāsudeva Vishnu on the battle field of Kurukshetra on the eve of the great war between the Pāndavas and Kauravas. It is the most popular book in the whole field of religious literature in India and is treated as a book of great veneration and authority by persons belonging to almost all the orthodox sects and creeds to support their dogmas. Very learned and valuable commentaries in Sanskrit have been written thereon by several leading Achāryas, Shankara being the earliest. Anandagiri, Shridhar Swami, Madhusudana Saraswati, Jñāneshvara, Rāmānuja, Mādhavāchārya and others have also written valuable commentaries thereon. It is also translated into almost all the Vernacular languages. There are several English translations, as those of Sir Charles Wilkins, J. Cockburn, Thompson, John Davies, Edwin Arnold, Mr. Hill (Oxford Press), Mr. Justice Telāng, Mrs. Annie Besant and Babu Bhagwāndās, Mr. Brookes and others. It is also translated into German, French, Latin and Greek. Lokmānya Tilak has also written a voluminous commentary on the Gītā in Marāṭhi while he was in prison. The great scholiast Shankarāchārya explains the main scope of the Gītā thus —“ The famous Gītā shāstra is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching. A knowledge of its teaching leads to the realization of all human aspirations.” Mahātma Gāndhi also deems Gītā as the source of great solace in the tragedies of life as would appear from his following remarks.—“ I find a solace in the Bhagwadgītā, that I miss even in the sermon on the mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not a ray of light, I go back to the Bhagwadgītā.

I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tingles and my life has been full of external tragedies and if they have left no visible scar on me I owe it all to the teachings of the Bhagwadgītā. There is a great controversy about the date of the Gita. Several persons following the opinion of Professor Maxmüller have stated that Gita was written in about 200 B. C. after the Brahma (Vedānta) Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa for which the date fixed is 200 B. C. Prof. Maxmüller has relied on the verse in the Gītā¹ which refers to the word Brahma Sūtra and from this circumstance he comes to the conclusion that Gita was written after Brahmin Sūtras. This view is however opposed to the view of Shankaracharya who interprets the word 'Brahmin Sūtra' in the above verse as referring to sentences speaking of Brahman contained in the Upanishads and not to the Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa. This view is accepted by Mr. Justice Telang in his preface to the translation of the Gītā in the Sacred Books of the East series. He has pointed out that the Vedānta Sūtras were written after the Gītā as several passages of the Gita are boldly taken in the Sūtras. Besides from Pāṇini (600 B. C.) we find that even prior to the Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa, there were other sūtras called Bṛukshu Sūtras which formed the basis of the former. Thus the Bhagwadgītā stands in date between the Upanishads and the Brahma Sūtras. From the nature of its contents the Gītā seems to be decidedly earlier than Buddhism. It is also earlier than the Pancharatra system of the Mahābhārata as neither the doctrine of the four Vyūhās nor even the name Narayana subsequently identified with Vāsudeva finds any place in the Gita. For these reasons Gita must be placed not later than 600 B. C. Again opinions of different commentators vary as regards the ultimate teaching of the Gita doctrine. Lokmīya Tilaka places Action in the forefront as the Gītā doctrine. Theistic Vaiṣṇava Achāryās state Devotion or Bhakti as the ultimate doctrine of Gītā while commentators having an ascetic turn of mind state knowledge accompanied with asceticism as the ultimate doctrine of the Gītā. All these views are partial and one-sided and they do

not give the whole view. It would be wrong to reduce Gītā to the level of a mere ethical book in face of the numerous theistic and philosophical doctrines taught therein. Nor does Gita teach us the doctrine of unreasoned ecstasy divorced from the duties of practical life and the dictates of common sense or isolated knowledge divorced from devotion and action. The purpose of the message of Lord Shri Krishna as an incarnation of the Supreme Spirit communicated to Arjuna as type of the ordinary average man is to teach the lesson that knowledge, devotion and the performance of duty without desire form the threefold path to emancipation. "It has so often been stated that work and knowledge and devotion are in Krishna's view alternative and equally efficient methods leading to release, that it is important to insist that these three methods are throughout the Gītā regarded as complementary" "It was the special merit of the author of the Gītā that he applied these current methods of control to Man's whole personality bringing into their right and balanced relationship the functions of reason and will and emotion" "One of the chief causes of Gītā's age-long popularity is the fact that after centuries of pent-up emotion, it presented the worshipper with a visible object of devotion and taught the value of pure disinterested love in the religious life." Unfortunately the doctrine of Bhakti (devotion) soon degenerated in the hands of "emotionalists who began to preach that ecstasy was all, sound study was ignored, the wild hysterical dance and the passionate repetition of the sacred names began to take the place of the more unexciting duties of the home and the simple service of mankind" The Bhagwad Gītā, the Vedas and Upanishads and the Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana constitute the Prasthāna Trayī or the three important religious books of authority binding on all orthodox schools of philosophy. The Bhagwad Gītā practically reiterates in another form the same philosophical doctrines as were taught in the Vedas and the Upanishads with special reference to the doctrine of monotheism to which valuable contribution was made by the Gītā. I shall therefore deal with the various subjects taught in the Gītā on the basis of the classification of the subjects which form parts of the Upanishadic philosophy.

II Ontology

(1) Discrimination of Ātman (Self) and Prakṛiti (not-self or Nature)

The very first lesson of great philosophical importance taught in the Gita is about the knowledge of discrimination (called Sankhya) of Ātman (self) and un-Ātman (not-self). In the Upanishads it was already taught that the only reality in this universe is Ātman or self whether of individual soul or supreme soul while the manifold world of names and forms as detached from and outside the Ātman as its centre is Māyā or Illusion. The same principle is repeated in the second chapter of the Gita. The first essential nature of Ātman (self) is its immortality and indestructibility.¹ Ātman is neither born nor does it die with the body which alone is perishable.² It is neither cut by weapons nor burnt by fire neither made wet by water nor dried by wind.³ It is abiding all-pervading stable and unmoved from eternity.⁴ It is sat (existence) and the uncaused reality of which our consciousness never fails.⁵ The world of names and forms as contrasted with Ātman (self) is fleeting and unreal.⁶ It is changing like states of childhood, youth, and old age of an embodied soul.⁷ The world of senses is also compared with the Fig-tree (Ashvattha) which is ever changing.⁸ This tree which stands for not-self (Prakṛiti) is not understood by unenlightened men. They do not comprehend its nature nor its beginning nor yet the source from which it springs.⁹ This tree must be cut down with the axe of detachment (Asanga Śāstra) only so can a man win release from rebirth, only so can a man reach the Person the First cause (Ādya Puruṣa) of not-self's energy.¹⁰ The world of apparent reality however is not a total phantom or a pure imagination of the mind but it has a relative reality consisting of the objects of our senses which cause Dvandvas (pairs) or opposites as heat and cold and joys and sorrows which are fleeting. These opposites are to be endured with fortitude.¹¹ All worldly objects are subject to changes from the unmanifest to the manifest and from the

1 (2-17). 2 (2-20). 3 (2-21). 4 (2-24). 5 (2-16).
 6. (2-14, 16, 2-33). 7 (2-13). 8. (15-1). 9 (15-3). 10 (15-3, 4).
 11 (2-14)

manifest to the unmanifest¹ Whatever is born is sure to die² The next essential attribute of Ātman is knowledge or self-conscious intelligence³ This attribute distinguishes Ātman from Nature which is inanimate The third essential attribute of Ātman is Bliss or Absolute joy as distinguished from the fleeting joys of the migrating embodied soul which are never unalloyed with miseries⁴ Thus according to Gītā the essential nature of Ātman (self or soul) is Absolute truth or immortality, knowledge, and Bliss which constitute its being in oneness similar to the teaching of the Upanishads. Lord Krishna further teaches us that "his essential nature is pure self or Ātman with which he identifies himself and as such he creates, sustains and destroys the universe"⁵ Now as regards the Upanishadic doctrine of identity of Ātman with Brahman, though Krishna has never directly stated so in express terms yet he establishes the truth of the said proposition indirectly in the following verse⁶ "Brahman immortal and indestructible abides in me together with everlasting virtue and absolute Bliss" This clearly means that Brahman is one with Pratyagātman or the inner spirit working through Krishna the incarnated soul Gītā also accepts the doctrine of Monism or absolute idealism of the Upanishads and it teaches the great lesson that the self of the individual soul is identical with that of the supreme soul, in the following verse⁷ "Know also me (i.e. individual soul) to be knower of the field (i.e. supreme soul) in all fields (i.e. bodies)"

(2) Ātman or True Self is not a Doer

After stating the essential nature of Ātman, Gītā next teaches the important philosophical doctrine that Ātman or true-self is not a doer According to Gītā, all activities appertain to the domain of the phenomenal world of relativity which is governed by the law of causality working under divine guidance and control and is relegated to the sphere of not-self or Prakṛiti (nature) which represents the cosmic power or Māyāśakti as regulating the whole universe. Ātman or pure self is only a knower or rather the eternal self-conscious intelligence, and not a doer All activities are adventitious and attributed to it only fictitiously for a certain purpose

1 (2-28) 2 (2-27) 3. (4-33, 38) 4 (6-21, 28) 5 (10-20)
 6 (14-27) 7 (13-2)

for the time being but they do not constitute its essential nature. Thus it is stated in the Gītā—' Entirely by the strands (gunas) or constituents of nature (Prakṛiti) are works done. He whose self is deluded by egoism thinks 'I am the doer'.'¹ Though I have created the four castes according to qualities and actions, yet know me as no worker and immutable.'² 'He who sees the self as not worker, he sees indeed.'³ Though the highest self dwells in the body he works not nor is he polluted.'⁴ 'Nor power of work does he create that mighty lord nor the world's works. It is nature (svabhāva) that comes forth to action.'⁵ It should not be however understood from the above that according to Gītā Prakṛiti, Māyā or Svabhāva which all mean nature or non-self does works or activities independent of self as the Gītā scrupulously follows the Advaita doctrine of Monism of the Upanishads according to which nature is never an independent principle. This point is made clear in the following verse—Nature (Prakṛiti) under invigilance and rule gives birth to all existing things moveable or immovable. For this reason the world revolves.'⁶

(3) Unity of Brahman Transcendent and Immanent.

Having seen above that according to Gītā there is no difference in the essential nature of individual soul (Ātman) and the supreme soul (Brahman) we shall now consider the nature of Brahman from two standpoints, transcendental and immanent.

The supreme being is called Brahman from a transcendental point of view while he is called Ishvara or Purushottama or personal God from an immanent point of view with reference to relativity.⁷ The knowledge of the Supreme Being from both the above standpoints is essential to obtain emancipation or the highest freedom.⁸ The transcendental form of the Supreme Being or the Absolute is the object of metaphysical knowledge while the immanent form of the personal God is the object of theological worship. The one is ideal and Nirguna (attributeless) and relates to the supreme unity without relations while the other is Saguna (with attributes) and relates to the phenomenal world of time space and causal relations. To avoid

1 (3-27) 2. (4-13) 3. (13-29) 4 (13-31). 5 (3-14). 6. (9-10).
7 (13-12, 15-17 18). 8. (18-55)

confusion of thought about the essential nature and the homogeneous integrity of the Supreme Being both the above standpoints should be kept entirely distinct. From this however it should not be understood that there is any difference or dualism in the essential nature or the integral unity of the Supreme Being who is one only without a second according to the Upanishadic doctrine of monism which is wholly accepted by the Gītā. As a matter of fact the Supreme Being is always Nirguna (Attributeless) which is Its essential nature and by describing Him as Saguna (with attributes) for purposes of worship and devotion (Bhakti) there is not the slightest change in His essential nature. The Saguna God is no other than Nirguna God. This is made clear in the following verse ¹ "Brahman is the imperishable (Akshara), the supreme. Its being is called the essential self (Adhyātman)." It is explained by Shankara that the immanent God is in reality no other than the transcendental Brahman ². The same transcendental Paramātman sustains every thing in the world by His power. The Saguna God or Īshvara is only the manifest form of Brahman itself in relation to the phenomenal world and not something separate or other than Nirguna Brahman. It is not possible to regard the Nirguna and Saguna as two separate entities in monistic philosophy. It is therefore wrong to ascribe to Shankara the view as some critics have done that in his system Īshvara or personal God is something other than and distinct from Brahman, or is inferior to Nirguna Brahman. The Nirguna aspect has been mentioned to show that God is unaffected by the relations of the world while the Saguna aspect has been mentioned to show that he controls and directs all the changes and movements in the world through his Māyā Shakti or immanent power. It is stated in the Gītā that knowledge of Para Brahma (attributeless) leads to immortality ³. As it is transcendental and not realizable by our senses being supersensuous, it is described in Negative terms as "Na sat tannāsat i.e. it is neither Sat (Manifest) nor is it asat (unmanifest)" ⁴. It is thus not identical with the manifest or the unmanifest as wrongly understood by pantheistic philosophers but is different from both. This might however lead to atheism if it is described only in negative terms as beyond human comprehension. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa while teaching monotheism

1. (8-3). 2. (M U Bh 2-1-3) 3. (13-12). 4. (13-12).

for purpose of devotion to God. The immanent and universal aspect of Brahman enters into the phenomenal world¹ but to avoid any misconception of its spiritual nature by a false identification with the material power, and its effect is described as *huma* (Virgins) and *vidita* (seen) the power of all powers and able to regulate and control the universe.² Thus Brahman or the Supreme Soul is one with *Isvara* and it is *ajaya* (transcendent and immanent). The *atma* (soul) of a man differs from *Isvara* and has to be in within the material unity of Brahman³ and there is nothing outside of or separate from him. All this universe is strung on him as *masa* of garlands on the thread.⁴

(4) The Doctrine of Knowledge and its usefulness.

The chief end of *bhakti* in the earliest Vedic times down to the present day among the Hindus is *brahma* (emancipation or *tripti* (fulfilment) which is variously described down in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. The fundamental doctrine of the Upanishads that emancipation is obtained only by knowledge of the true spiritual self who is the unmediated cause of emancipation while the other means viz. in *litany*, *ascetic* (fast mortification, good conduct etc.) are the mediate causes of emancipation.⁵ Gita however has reconciled all these different means of emancipation and formulated a system showing that there are only two principal methods viz. the *Saikhya* method of knowledge and the *Yoga* method of work which together form the twofold path for emancipation.⁶ These two paths of knowledge and works like theory and practice are complementary.

Some kind of work as duty without desire was essential to reach the perfect stage after *renunciation* which action was not obligatory.⁷ The highest kind of work laid down for purification of the mind was *sacrifice* which term was used in a very wide sense in the Gita so as to include then in worship and devotion.⁸ It is further taught by Krishna that if all actions are done for sacrifice without desire and dedicated to the Supreme Lord with knowledge that one is true self which is identical with the universal self is not doing any

1 (13-17) 2 (13-14) 3 (13-16-10) 4 (7-7-10) 5 (S. U. 6-16 B. U. 4-4-22).
6. (3-3) 7 (3-4-9-17). 8 (4-21).

work but that it is only his lower nature (Prakṛiti) or the receptive mind that does work, then his work is burnt up in the knowledge of sacrifice as no work at all and it does not cause any hindrance to release.¹ According to Gītā, action without desire is useful for purification of the mind.² But after reaching perfection by doing good works, works are lessened and more time is devoted to contemplation and knowledge of the Supreme Being.³ According to Gītā as well as the Upanishads it is only knowledge of the identity of the Supreme Self with the individual self that directly brings about emancipation. Action is only the indirect cause of emancipation and a means towards the end but not the end in itself, as will appear from the following verses in the Gītā. "Now I will declare this most mysterious knowledge together with intuitional experience by knowing which you shall be released."⁴ "That which is to be known I will declare, knowing which one attains immortality".⁵ "Knowledge of the difference between the Kṣhetrajña (knower of the field) and Kṣhetra (field) will lead to release".⁶ "Through devotion does he recognise me in verity, what and who I am, then knowing me in verity, at once he enters into me."⁷

Kṛishna bestows the highest praises on spiritual knowledge and the man of knowledge. Thus he says that the man of knowledge is his very self.⁸ Kṛishna mentions the following advantages of knowledge, viz (1) That knowledge removes for ever all delusion.⁹ (2) The knower gains a vision of the oneness of all and the knowledge that he and all are one with Kṛishna.¹⁰ (3) Knowledge destroys all sin.¹¹ (4) Knowledge burns up all works as a burning fire makes ashes of the fuel.¹² (5) It purifies the knower's self.¹³ (6) By knowledge one obtains the highest peace.¹⁴ (7) Knowledge dissolves all doubts.¹⁵ (8) Works lose their binding effect on the man of knowledge.¹⁶

(5) The Theory of Union (Samuchhaya) of action and knowledge

Some commentators of the Gītā have propounded the view that Gītā teaches the doctrine of union of action and knowledge as direct means to emancipation. This view is however severely criticised

1 (4-23, 33, 37, 5-10) 2 (5-11) 3. (6-3) 4 (9-1) 5. (13-12).
6. (13-34) 7 (18-55). 8 (7-18) 9. (4-35) 10 (6-29, 13-2)
11. (4-36) 12. (4-37) 13 (4-38). 14. (4-39) 15. (4-41). 16. (4-41).

by Shankaracharya who has controverted the same by very cogent and subtle argument. It is true that Gita does not support the view of total inaction.¹ Gita recognises the value of a moral life accompanied with a very rigorous discipline for purification of the mind as means to emancipation by way of preparation towards it through the stage of devotion.² Further Gita follows the path of the middle course by avoiding two extremes viz one-sidedly knowledge as divorced from devotion and a strict one with complete abandonment of all work on the one hand and the path of blind devotion divorced from action and knowledge on the other. However Gita does not teach the doctrine of union of action and knowledge as the direct means to emancipation as believed by certain scholars. I have already pointed out above that Gita literally follows the cardinal doctrine of the Upanishads that emancipation results directly from the philosophical knowledge of the Supreme soul only. The theory of union and knowledge as directly leading to emancipation would therefore be inconsistent with the above cardinal doctrine of the Upanishads. Knowledge and action are opposed to each other as light and darkness, and they cannot co-exist. Actions are done by Prakriti or lower nature in the form of the receptive mind while the self-conscious spirit is never a doer as has been already pointed out above. Gita further teaches the lesson that all actions are burnt by spiritual knowledge as blazing fire burns the fuel to ashes³ in conformity with the teaching of the Upanishads as will appear from the following quotation from the Mundaka Upanishad — The fetters of the heart are broken all doubts are dissolved all his works (and their effects) perish when the Supreme Being both transcendent and immanent is seen⁴.

From the above discussion the reader will at once see that the above theory of Union of action and knowledge as the direct means to emancipation is untenable.

III Theology

(1) Early History of Theism

I have already pointed out in the previous chapters that in India theology was never divorced from philosophy as in the West

1 (2-47 3-5 8 24 18-11) 2. (6 11 6-3, 41 12-2) 3 (4-23 37).
4. (M. U. 2-2-8).

but was a part and parcel of philosophy. The Upanishads consist of two parts one dealing with Upāsanas or meditations of God and the other with knowledge of the Supreme Being. As a matter of fact in India religion preceded philosophy. It began at first in the Vedas with polytheism, or a belief in many gods. Then it took the shape of henotheism by which one deity was considered supreme to the forgetfulness of all others whose functions were attributed to the former. Henotheism was shortly followed by pantheism whereby the whole universe was identified with the supreme deity. The last stage of evolution of human thought in the Vedic period took the shape of monotheism or the belief of one Supreme God, who was the creator, sustainer and ruler of the universe and also the object of human worship. Even the gods of nature are subordinate to him. The trend of thought in the Upanishads on the other hand took a different turn. The Upanishads begin with idealism and pantheism and end with monotheism. The monotheism of the Upanishads however does not seem to have been developed from the ancient Vedic polytheism but independently from idealism and pantheism. The theistic conception of a Personal God in the earlier Upanishads was different from that in the Vedas and he is not called deva (god) implying manifestation of his power as in the Vedas but *Īsa* or *Īshvara* i. e. ruler and *Antaryāmi* i. e. controller of the universe. The idea of a Personal God as the worthy object of love and adoration was however developed subsequently in later theistic Upanishads as the Svetāsvatara and Katha Upanishads, when *Īshvara* or the supreme soul came to be contrasted not only with the universe but also with the individual soul. The chief functions of bringing works to maturity and apportioning their fruits to the souls were then attributed to *Īshvara* theistically. The theism of the Svetāsvatara Upanishad identified Shiva-Rudra with the supreme deity. It was further developed in the later Upanishads and led to the formation of the two cults of Shiva and Viṣṇu which constitute the popular religions of India to-day. The Bhagwad-Gītā however goes a stage further and it presents us with the first clear statement of Avatāra or descent of God as a saviour conferring divine grace upon his votaries as reward for their warm and passionate devotion (Bhakti) to him. This new element of emotion enhanced the value of the theistical religions and led to the greatest popularity and fame of the Gītā.

(2) Incarnation of Krishna-Vasudeva

The conception of Shiva and Vishnu as personal Gods failed to develop real Bhakti or devotion which was aroused for the first time by the doctrine of the incarnations of God and particularly that of Krishna-Vasudeva among men as a visible object of devotion and pure love. The doctrine of Avatara or incarnation of Krishna-Vasudeva is presented to us in a very clear form in the Gītā. It is proclaimed by Shri Krishna in the following terms: 'Though unborn and immutable in essence, though Lord of all beings yet governing nature which is mine I come into being by my delusive power. For whosoever virtue declines, Bharata, and vice uprises then I create myself. To guard the virtuous and destroy the wicked and to confirm the right I come into being in this age and in that.'¹ The idea of Avatara or descent of God in human form appears for the first time in the Gītā. This followed from the identification of Krishna-Vasudeva with the highest divinity. It is stated by Krishna that this doctrine of Avatara is not new but that it is a very old doctrine and that there have been many births of both Arjuna as well as Krishna which are all known by the latter but not the former. The idea of repeated avatars of Vishnu in the form of fish, tortoise and the Boar was already in the Brāhmaṇas and it seems to have been applied by Krishna by identifying himself with the Supreme Brahman and stating his avatāra as a descent of Brahman in this universe. It seems that the identification of Krishna Vasudeva was at first with Brahman the highest divinity and not with Vishnu and his identification with the latter was only subsequent to get popular recognition from the orthodoxy of the doctrine of avatāra through a Vedic deity which was easily supplied in the form of Vishnu whose name was already associated with Avatars in the Brāhmaṇas. The above inference is further borne out by the fact that the name of Vishnu occurs only three times in the Gītā and that too only as a subordinate deity or Vibhūti (glorious form) along with others as in the verse cited below,² and further by the fact that in the avatāra passage Krishna has not claimed to be Vishnu.

1. (4-6 to 8). 2. (10-21)

(a) **Whether the embodied form of the incarnate Kṛishṇa is the Supreme Brahman or a part manifestation of his glories (Vibhūti).**

In the Mahābhārata we find that the incarnate Kṛishṇa is mentioned as an avatāra of only one part of Viṣṇu and not of the whole Brahman. The well known commentator Shankarāchārya in his introduction to the Gītā also says the same thing. A different view however is expressed in the Bhāgwat Purāṇa which gives an account of the life and doings of Shri Kṛishṇa. According to this version Kṛishṇa in his embodied form is an avatāra or descent of the whole Brahman and not merely a part. This view is inconsistent with the statement of Kṛishṇa himself in the verse² cited below where he describes himself in his embodied form as Vāsudeva son of Vasudeva of the Vṛishnis or the descendants of Yadu. Here Kṛishṇa is alluded to as the chief of the class called Vṛishnis and not as the Supreme Being and Kṛishṇa is Vāsudeva in this sense only because the best thing of a group or class is represented to be the Vibhūti or part manifestation of the glories of the Supreme Being which are innumerable. It would be really absurd to believe that any single embodied form in this illusory world of names and forms however glorious or powerful it may be, could be identified with the all pervading supreme deity. That which is limited by the relations of time, space and causation of this empirical world can never be equated with that which is illimitable or transcendental. The above conception therefore of Kṛishṇa in an embodied human form as an incarnation of the whole transcendental supreme deity and identifying his physical body with the supreme spirit is not correct and does not stand the rational test nor is it consistent with the teachings of Lord Kṛishṇa himself in the Gītā as a whole. Obviously the above conception is an application of the doctrine of lower pantheism which is certainly not the purport of the teachings of the Upanishads nor of the Gītā. This point is made clear by Kṛishṇa himself at the end of the tenth chapter dealing with Vibhūties or the manifestations of the glorious forms of the supreme deity in the concluding verses as summarising the whole chapter. The said verses run as follows:—“Whatever thing is glorious, prosperous

or strong, know thou that this is sprung from a part of my splendour. But what avail thee, this long lesson, Arjuna? I by one part of myself stand sustaining the whole universe."¹ These verses therefore clearly go to show that even by adding up all the manifest forms of this visible world which is pervaded by the supreme being in its immanent aspect, you cannot get an idea of his whole transcendental aspect which is veiled as a mystery to ordinary persons being concealed by the projected rays of the divine illusion.

(b) The embodied form of Krishna is illusory (i.e. of Māyā)

Even in the verse expounding the doctrine of Avatāras of the Supreme Being, Krishna makes clear that his embodied form is illusory (i.e. of Māyā). It is this delusive power of Krishna that makes people to identify his body which is illusory (i.e. of Māyā) with the universal and all pervading spirit which is unborn and immutable and treat the latter as born.² This view is supported by the teachings of Krishna in the second chapter that soul which is pure spirit is never born, while the body which is material is born and it always decays. It is further made clear in the following verses,³ where it is taught that "all material objects of nature are born from the supreme spirit and are dependent on him but the supreme spirit is not one with them being transcendental and distinct from them. Such false identification of material objects with pure spirit is due to illusion only."

The same idea is brought out in the following verse⁴ "By me in form unmanifest is all this universe pervaded all beings dwell in me (i.e. are dependent on me) but I dwell not in them. (i.e. I am not co-extensive with them)." Still more explicit is the statement in the following verse⁵ where Krishna says "Fools regard me the supreme being who is the substrate of the universe as a material object not knowing that my higher nature is transcendental and immutable."

(c) Organic unity of the cosmos in the being of Krishna transcendent and immanent.

Krishna Vāsudeva of the Gītā is not "a particular pet godling to be patted for the sake of sugar-plums here or hereafter"⁶ but he is the incarnate Lord of all and Brahman the Absolute. In chapter

1. (10-41-42) 2. (4-6) 3. (7-12-13-14) 4. (9-4) --
 5. (7-24) 6. Brookes G. L.

ten Krishna at first describes his nature as the transcendental source of all and the immanent Lord possessed of all-pervading powers by which he remains immanent in the various objects of the world which is but part of his glory and then in chapter eleven he reveals to Arjuna his Universal and infinite form of which Arjuna had an ecstatic vision by divine sight. The above picture of Krishna-Vāsudeva presents an organic unity of the whole cosmos even in diversity and variety and shows he is not a pet godling to be worshipped in isolation by his chosen few votaries as wrongly understood by some of the bigoted sectarians. It is therefore quite natural that such a worthy object of love and adoration as Krishna Vāsudeva described in the Gītā should have obtained the greatest popularity. Krishna is not merely transcendent but he is also immanent and conditioned thus giving a most comprehensive view of the Supreme Being.

(d) Krishna as concrete manifestation of the all pervading and infinite Brahman for worship.

The greatest service done by the Bhagwad Gītā to the cause of Indian religion and philosophy is by teaching the doctrine of pure Bhakti or devotion to the supreme Being through a visible concrete object in the form of Krishna-Vāsudeva who was not a mere godling but an incarnation of the all-pervading and infinite Brahman enshrined within all creatures¹. Krishna as the incarnation of the Supreme Being, who is transcendental as well as all-pervading, takes also a bodily form which is "something actual real and practical and not a mere abstraction of "Isness". Worship is something actual and practical and it implies loving relations between the devotee and the object of devotion. Krishna Vāsudeva as incarnation of the personal Lord in a human form was a worthy object of love in whom his devotees had implicit faith on account of some of his noblest teachings in the Gītā and his profession of love to Arjuna and to all mankind including even the worst sinners.

(3) The doctrine of Bhakti or devotion.

(a) The path of devotion in the Gita is universal and non-sectarian.

The path of devotion laid down in the Gītā is non-sectarian and non-exclusive but is universal. It was not the monopoly of only

1 (4-6, 7-19, 9-11, 22, 29, 10-20).

(c) Simple worship with love preferred to the formal one

The doctrine of devotion in the Gītā further looks more to the heart than to the external forms of worship as appears from the following verse—Every action whether work, eating, sacrifice, gift or austerity must be performed as an offering to Krishna and if it is accompanied with love and devotion it is sure to be accepted by him however poor or simple the offering may be as leaf, flower, fruit or water¹ The Bhakti doctrine of Gītā is extremely simple and it presents a strange contrast to the present day costly and gorgeous worship in the Hindu temples accompanied by very complicated rites and forms. The later day Bhaktas (devotees) elaborated the system to such a bewildering extent that there were no less than eighty one minor forms of Bhakti leading up to the highest as stated by Shridhara Swami

(d) Identity of Krishna Vāsudeva with the Supreme Being as the Royal mystery.

I shall now explain the Royal mystery of devotion as taught by Krishna to Arjuna. A knowledge of this mystery leads to final release and emancipation. Krishna often substitutes his own personality in the Gītā for the Supreme Being as an object of love and devotion. Now what is meant by the term 'me' when Krishna asks us to worship him in place of the Supreme Being?² The answer to this is given by Krishna himself in the ninth chapter where he defines himself the 'Me' whom we are to worship and know. Krishna there does not mean a particular pet god-ling called the fondled god-son of mother Yasodā located in a particular place as a separate person whom we approach turning our backs to all other places, but he means the all-pervading supreme self (Ātman) in which the worshipper as well as all his fellow creatures live and move and have their being. We find the crux of this knotty problem in the following verses³ where Krishna teaches the Royal mystery, that Krishna Vāsudeva the incarnate Lord in his immanent and cosmic form is identical with Brahman in transcendental form as the cause of all. It is Krishna the universal immanent spirit in a carnate form who pervades the whole universe

as its essential self and who supports all beings. The said verses run as follows —

“The deluded fools turn their backs on me who am enshrined in the body of man in the form of humanity (manushim tanum) failing to recognise my deeper underlying essence and being, the supreme ruler of all creatures.”

“Vain their hopes (of salvation for themselves as apart) vain deeds vain their knowledge (which is false) endowed as they are with false consciousness and void of true heart consciousness. They enter the delusive nature (in its exclusiveness and separateness) of monsters and devils.”¹

The substance of Krishna's teaching of the Royal Mystery of devotion therefore comes to this that those who see no further than Krishna's human form and therefore scorn him are fools. But those who understand the Royal Mystery that Krishna the incarnate personal Lord is one with the impersonal supreme being, worship him alone in sympathetic unity and not in separateness with earnest steadfastness and single hearted devotion.²

(c) Organic unity of the cosmos in Krishna's lower and higher natures

The doctrine of Bhakti is further stated in the 7th and 8th chapters of the Gita where Krishna imparts the knowledge of him self as having two natures viz. lower (Apara) and higher (Para). The lower nature is divided into the five elements and mind, reason and individuation.³ The higher nature consists of that all pervading principle of life which is the support of all the existing beings.⁴ All creatures are born by these two powers and Krishna is the cause of the origin and dissolution of all.⁵ There is nothing higher than him. On him the universe depends as do the gems that form a necklace on the thread that binds them.⁶ Krishna further explains that the three constituents of non-self viz., Purity (Sattva) energy (Rajas) and Darkness (Tamas) originate from him alone and constitute his lower nature. He is not subject to these three strands of nature, like mortal beings but they are subject to him.⁷ Not-self or Mâyâ which is controlled by Krishna with its three strands veils from the world

1 [8-11, 12]. 2 (8-13, 14). 3. (7-4) 4 (7-5) 5 (7-6). 6. (7-7). 7 (7-12).

as the latter is far more difficult and painful than the former though the fruit is the same and even the who cannot implant the unyieldable Brahman reach Krishna's lot.¹ Further Krishna says that even the abandonment of the fruit of work if practised with devotion is superior to the colder intellectual modes that exclude devotion altogether.²

(4) Unity of Krishna in various aspects

(a) Krishna as Parabrahma or Triple Purusha.

In the fifteenth chapter Krishna speaks of the doctrine of three Purushas or persons at different levels—the impersonable and the Supreme (Parabrahma). The impersonable person is all beings in the world itself in every being,³ which corresponds to *Apārā Prkṛti*.⁴ The impersonal is called *Kṛtyakṛta*—immortally exalted which is unmovable contact with objects of nature. It corresponds to *Para Prkṛti* or *Jyotiḥ*.⁵ The Supreme Purusha (Parabrahma) is the highest Lord who entering the threefold world supports it.⁶ He is called *Devadeva* because he transcends the perishable as well as the imperishable.⁷ The Supreme Purusha is cosmic Purusha who is both transcendent and immanent. Here Krishna the incarnation of the supreme is cosmic Purusha⁸ having two natures viz. self and not-self which are combined in every being thus showing the organic unity of the universe. The three Purushas are not really separate or detached but they constitute one Purusha in three aspects. The word Purusha suggests personality both of the individual and the universal self and which is both cosmic and individual. It suggests personality within the impersonal. The idea of Purusha is not a new one but dates back to the Rig Veda and is found in the Purusha Sukta.⁹

Here Purusha is universal and all-pervading. This universe is but one-fourth of him from an immanent point of view, while three-fourths is immortality in the heaven from a transcendental point of view. Ordinarily there seems a distinction between Purushas objectively and subjectively called *Adhidaiva* and *Adhyātma* respectively but it is not real. Thus the devas controlling the

1 (12-2 to 7).	2 (12-12).	3 (15-16).	4 (7-5).	5 (7-5).
6 (15-17).	7 (15-18).	8. (15-18)	9 R. V (10-90)	

cosmic forces of nature are called *Purusha Adhidaiva* (objective power), while the corresponding senses of the individual are called *Purusha Adhyātma* (subjective power) Both these Purushas are really one Thus the Purusha in the Sun is purusha in the eye or Adhidaiva is identical with Adhyātma. There is a third form of Purusha viz. The perishable Purusha which is called *Purusha Adhibhūta* relative to a particular material object. Krishna as Purushottama combines all the three above forms within himself viz Adhyātma (spiritual) Adhidaiva (energetic) and Adhibhūta (material). Krishna is Adhidaiva as the source of cosmic energy which makes the gods work. Adhidaiva person is called the eternal person who is described most beautifully as a personal God in the Upanishads as also in the Gita,¹ devotion to whom leads to emancipation by stages Krishna is Adhyātma as the essential self of the imperishable Supreme Brahman,² while Krishna as Purusha Adhibhūta (i.e. essential being) is perishable existence with reference to prakṛiti or nature³ Though Purusha Adhidaiva is identical with Purusha Adhyātma, both being spiritual, yet he is not identified with Purusha Adhibhūta as the latter is not-self or Krishna's lower nature which is perishable existence (Prakṛiti) Krishna preferably speaks of the lower nature as 'belonging to him' and 'under his governance'⁴ rather than as himself. There is organic unity between all the three Purushas mentioned above The man seeking emancipation must know all the three above forms of Purushas.⁵ I have already stated above that Adhidaiva Purusha (objective power) is the same as Adhyātma Purusha (subjective power) both being spiritual life forces and there is no difference whatever between Purushottama and Akshara (Immutable) Purusha As a matter of fact Krishna identifies himself with the essential self called Kshetrajna within all embodied souls⁶ In spite of this, certain sectarians have propounded the view that Purushottama as Adhidaiva or God of the theologians is superior to the Akshara Brahman or attributeless Absolute of the philosophers and Vice Versa Both these views are false and evidently seem to be the outcome of sectarian fanaticism and bigotry. In the Upanishadic doctrine of non-dual monism which is throughout followed in the Gītā there is no question of

1. (8-8 to 10). 2. (8-3) 3. (8-4). 4. (4-6; 9-8, 10). 5 (7-30) 6. (13-2)

any dualism in the integrity and unity of the supreme being which is one only without a second

(b) Krishna as Ishvara or Ruler

The names Isa and Ishvara are not applied to Brahman in the older Upanishads until we come to Srotastavakam and Isa Upanishads. The term Ishvara at once suggests the idea of personal deity in monotheism as an object of adoration and worship. In Gita as in the Upanishads Ishvara is both transcendent ruler and immanent Lord. Krishna calls himself Ishvara in the following verse¹ "The Lord O Arjuna dwells in the heart of everything and by his delusive power spins round all beings set on machine." He further calls himself as the great lord of all the worlds (Bhuta Maheshvara)². He is also called Parameshvara (ie the Lord Supreme) dwelling alike in all beings perishing not as they perish. He sees indeed who sees him as above.³

(c) Krishna as God of Justice and fruit giver

Krishna advises Arjuna to do his duty without any eye to fruit, as it is Krishna's province only to give fruit and not man's. Although Krishna holds out hopes of grace to his votaries who take sole refuge under him and dedicate to him all works done by them with humble and meek submission having faith in his divine powers, he never shows any capricious partiality or vindictiveness towards any one⁴ nor does he encourage total abstinence from all work or idleness in his votaries⁵. In the fourth chapter Krishna lays down a general rule for men as an incarnation for their guidance viz that they must follow the path of virtue on lines laid down by Krishna such as helping the right, punishing the wicked,⁶ doing philanthropic and altruistic works of general usefulness (Loka samgraha) in a self sacrificing spirit and without any selfish desire and so on⁷. He confers his gracious favour upon all who come to him exactly in the manner in which they approach him⁸. They have to satisfy him by dedicating their unselfish work to him that they deserve to merit his grace. Persons who are idle doing no useful work in a spirit of sacrifice and unselfishness, merely chanting his

1. (18-61) 2. (9-11). 3. (13-28). 4. (9-29). 5. (2-47).
6. (4-8) 7. (3-25). 8. (4-11).

names with dances of ecstasy do not participate his grace. Thus in the verse noted below,¹ Krishna lays down the rule of impartiality for the guidance of all his devotees "All beings I regard alike, not one is hateful to me or beloved, but those who with devotion worship me abide in me and I in them" Shankarāchārya interprets the word 'Bhajanti' in the above verse as 'do service with devotion' for which we find a support in the well known grammarian Panini (600 B. C.). Shankarāchārya compares Krishna to fire which does not choose on whom it should spread its warmth. He who draws near it will be warmed while he who remains aloof from it will not have his cold ward off. The above verse clearly shows that Krishna is neither partial nor averse towards any one but he displays a sense of real justice by awarding rewards and punishments in exact proportion to the nature of the deeds done by that person. He is always impartial and just towards all. The above doctrine inspires in the hearts of the votaries feelings of love and adoration for Krishna, as also Faith in his powers and Hope for rewards in future according to their qualifications. By having full faith in these doctrines one is calm and contented and never grumbles against God for his misfortunes. He is convinced that Krishna could never be unjust to him and that he himself must be responsible for his sufferings having done some misdeeds in the past. Thus he accepts his lot cheerfully and resignedly and he is thereby freed from unnecessary worries and anxieties. Realizing his own shortcomings and mistakes he mends his future life by doing meritorious and virtuous deeds in the hope that Krishna is sure to lead him on to the spiritual path thereby.

(5) The Doctrine of Divine Grace.

Krishna as an incarnation of the supreme being was the most adorable object of devotion as he was the saviour by whose divine grace one could attain the eternal and immutable realm.² Krishna has taught Arjuna his devotee to cast off in thought all works done by him on Krishna, to make Krishna his goal and fix his thought ever on Krishna by the practice of discernment,³ and Krishna assures him that "if he did work fixing his thoughts on Krishna he would surmount all difficulties by the grace of Krishna." Again the following verse⁴

1. (9-29) 2. (18-56). 3. (18-57). 4. (18-66).

contains the summary of the whole of the Gita's doctrine of grace which will free Krishna's devotee from all sins. "Abandoning every duty come to me alone for refuge. I will release thee from all sin; sorrow not."

According to Rāmānuja the sole aim of the Gita is to teach the great lesson of Prapatti or dedication of one's self wholly to the mercy of the Lord with meekness and humility as the surest means of securing release from all sins and emancipation. Krishna sums up to Arjuna his beloved friend the deep mystery of his teachings in the following verses¹ 'all thoughts, sacrifice, worship and reverence must be directed towards Krishna.'² 'All work must be performed with true abandonment and Krishna alone must be sought as refuge and for which Krishna promises to deliver Arjuna from all sins and tells him not to grieve'³

IV Cosmology

(1) Creation by the Lord of dual nature

I have already pointed out above while dealing with the metaphysical and theological doctrines of the Gita that although these are based on the Upanishads, yet the principal aim of the Gita being to teach pure monotheism it is naturally not free from empiric tendencies and it has set up a distinct theory of creation which is based on the law of causation. According to this theory creation is a process of evolution of the manifest from the unmanifest and the unmanifest from the manifest and so on in a ceaseless cycle from eternity.⁴ The law of evolution is continuity is a part and parcel of the nature of Krishna who is therefore believed to be the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe as also its ruler and controller. Krishna Vāsudeva is according to Gita both the efficient as well as the material cause of the world,⁵ as also cause of its destruction.⁶ He is also the sustainer of the universe wherein all beings abide and by whom the universe is pervaded.⁷ The true form of Krishna Vāsudeva however being as an all-pervading universal spirit there could be no creation of the material world by any conversion (Parinama) of pure spirit

1 (18-64). 2 (18-65). 3. (18-66) 4 (2-28) 5 (10-8 7-10 12).
6 (7-6). 7 (9-4 6, 10).

which is always immaterial as wrongly propounded by the school of pure monism started by Vallabha. To avoid such a misconception Krishna has propounded the doctrine of creation by him as a Supreme Being through his two powers called *Apaiā* or lower nature and *Parā* or higher nature,¹ which are always parts and parcels of his being from eternity.² The lower nature is also called simply *Prakṛiti* or the power of the personal God to evolve the material world of names and forms from the unmanifest state. It is also called the potential energy or *Prāṇa śakti* of the Lord which is never independent of the supreme spirit in any of the three stages of creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe. *Prakṛiti* or nature in its primordial state consists of 3 *Guṇas* or strands called *Satva* (Purity), *Rajas* (energy) and *Tāmas* (darkness), which are at rest and in a state of equipoise. Before creation *Prakṛiti* is merged in the Universal Spirit. The names and forms of the material objects about to be evolved are not then in a manifest form but are merged in the potential energy of the Lord who is then inactive. An undulatory or a vibratory movement is started in the *Prakṛiti* just when the Lord begins to feel a desire to create and evolution then sets in motion. The names and forms however in the state prior to creation are not reduced to nothingness, but have an ideal existence as germs in the mind of the personal God. They are insentient and are incapable of any motion by themselves until informed by the power of the supreme spirit. They are always objects but never subjects. The two natures of the Lord mentioned above are always inseparable and constitute the solid integrity of the supreme person. The lower nature known as *Prakṛiti* is the matrix of the material world and it first evolves cosmic intelligence from which comes the principle of individuation. The five elements ether, wind, fire (heat), water and earth are next evolved as also the evolutes of the 10 senses and mind from the principle of individuation. The higher nature is called *Jivabhūtam* i.e. essential life or pure spirit by which this universe is upheld.³ All beings are born of these 2 natures of the supreme soul. The lower nature being insentient cannot evolve the universe by itself without union of the higher nature or essential life of the supreme soul under whose

1 (7-5, 6) 2. (13-19) 3. (7-5).

guidance and control the lower nature which is the cause of the material world emanates from the world evolution. The two natures of the supreme soul higher (para) and lower (Apara) are also called parashakti or Kshetrajna and Prakriti or Kshetria in the 17th chapter and Atman Parama and Kshama Parama in the 15th chapter. It is by the interplay of these two natures that all objects of the Universe which are static or moving are produced. Kshetrajna or prakriti is also described as Mahat Brahman - the great Brahman and the supreme soul called the father. The supreme soul as father is called by the name in Mahat Brahman (the great Brahman) which is called the womb and there comes to birth everything. All the products of this material world partake of the nature of the three constituents of Prakriti viz. Sattva (quality) Rajas (energy) or Tamas (darkness). These three constituents or strands (gunas) of Prakriti have their origin from an ultimate source viz. the supreme soul who is independent of and not subject to the strands but they are dependent on him. The whole world being deluded by these constituents of nature does not recognize that the supreme soul is higher than these but they confound him with the strands of nature and believe him to be material when he is not.

(2) Order of evolution

All the products of the universe are ultimately derived from the above two natures of the supreme soul and which are themselves unborn. Prakriti or nature when treated as the potential life energy of the supreme soul having its being in him is unborn and indestructible but it is deemed to be born with reference to the three strands (gunas) viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas which are evolved from it in the following order. First there is the supreme soul called Kshetrajna which is the conscious principle and is identical in essence with the supreme soul. Then there is Prakriti which by nature is insentient and from which is first evolved Avyakta made up of the three strands (gunas) Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. From Avyakta proceeds consecutively in the order mentioned below, first

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- | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 (17-20). | 2. (14-14). | 3 (7-12) | 4 (7-13). | 5 (7-24). |
| 6 (13-19). | 7 (13-2). | | | |

cosmic reason, then the principle of individuation, and then the five elements ether, wind, fire (heat) water and earth. From the principle of individuation comes 10 organs of perception and action and mind and lastly comes the five objects of senses thus making the total number twenty five¹ This number tallies with the total number of principles mentioned in the atheistical school of the Sāṅkhyas who however mean by Purusha the embodied soul but not the supreme soul. But in the Gītā we have twenty six principles which we obtain by adding one more principle to the 25 principles of the atheistic Sāṅkhyas called the supreme soul or Kshetrajna or the conscious principle as distinguished from the embodied souls migrating in the world These embodied souls (collectively called Purushas) are made up by a combination (Sanghāta) of the above principles derived from Prakṛiti with Desire, hate, pleasure, pain, association, intelligence and constancy² All the above twenty-five principles including the embodied soul or Purusha, except the supreme soul or Kshetrajna which is the principle of consciousness, are called Kshetra or field which is insentient and unconscious by nature.³ Kshetia is ever changing and unreal while Kshetrajna is ever unchanging and unmoved It is the pure spirit of consciousness and light and is a life giver to the products of Prakṛiti.

(3) The doctrine of three gunas (strands) of Nature.

Each separate being springs from the union of spirit with Prakṛiti or nature which is also called the womb Krishna as father deposits in the womb of Prakṛiti the seed which is essential life, thus causing the birth of every individual⁴ The first principle of the material universe is Prakṛiti or nature which consists of the three strands or constituents (gunas) called Satva (purity) Rajas (energy) and Tamas (darkness) The evolution of this universe takes place only by the development of the above three strands of nature These three strands are found in all beings in varying proportions It is owing to the attachment to these three gunas or strands born of nature that the embodied soul is bound in

1. (13-5) 2. (13-6) 3. (13-6) 4. (14-3, 4)

Prakriti and becomes a bonded slave ¹ When the light of knowledge springs up, it may be known that Satwa (Purity) is predominant.² Energy (Rajas) is passion and results from attachment ³ Darkness (tamas) is illusive and results from ignorance ⁴ Character of a man depends on a true and balanced relationship of these three gunas. Presence of knowledge marks purity, keen and ceaseless activities mark the prevalence of energy while dullness lethargy and indolence mark the prevalence of darkness ⁵ If purity is predominant in a man he goes to celestial realms on death. If energy is predominant he is reborn among men while if darkness prevails he is reborn after death in lower forms of life as animals, etc.⁶ Emancipation is obtained by those who realize the knowledge that work is done by the strands of Prakriti while the supreme soul who is higher than the strands is never a doer ⁷ These three gunas are not qualities but are the primary constituents of Prakriti and are the basis of all substances which bind fast the self which is indestructible in the body ⁸ Even the happiness and knowledge derived by the migrating soul in the empirical world are modifications of Sattva and are attributes of Antahakarana (inner self) which is a product of Prakriti or Kshetra (not-self) ⁹ and these bind the embodied self by making him think 'I am happy and wise' ¹⁰ although really speaking these do not belong to the pure self. When the embodied Soul crosses beyond these three strands of Prakriti, he obtains emancipation and immortal bliss ¹¹ The man who has crossed beyond the strands is completely indifferent to and unmoved by them and he realizes that all activity belongs to Prakriti ¹² He treats the usual pairs (dvandvas) as pain and sorrow etc. and earth and gold as alike and with indifference and perfect equanimity of mind without any perturbation whatever ¹³ Whatever work he does he does without desire. Such a stage fits a person for emancipation and is reached by unflinching devotion and loving service to Krishna, ¹⁴ for it is Krishna the Incarnate Lord in whom the Supreme Brahman rests who is the source of changeless immortality, of the eternal law of virtue, and of supreme and unparalleled joy ¹⁵

1 (14-5) 2. (14-11) 3. (14-12), 4 (14-17) 5 (14-6 to 8) 6. (14-14)
 7 (14-20) 8 (14-5) 9 (13-6) 10 (14-6) 11. (14-26) 12 (14-23),
 1² (14-24) 14. (14-26) 15 (14-27).

(4) The Doctrine of Non-Dual Monism or Absolute Idealism.

The theory of creation by the combination of Spirit and Prakṛiti (nature) and the working of the three strands (gunas) born from it as set out above might create a prima facie impression that the Gītā teaches the doctrine of dualism like the Sāṅkhya but it is not so in fact I have already pointed out above that Prakṛiti or nature is not an independent or self-subsisting principle detached from the supreme soul. Prakṛiti is always insentient and unconscious while Puruṣa is a conscious principle. Prakṛiti is ever changing while Puruṣa is Kūṭastha or immutable and unchangeable. Prakṛiti has its being only within the universal spirit and not outside of him. The three strands of Prakṛiti are evolved by the supreme soul from within its own self and not from outside. The names and forms of the manifest world just prior to creation subsist only as objects of the thought of the supreme soul and not independent of him. The acts of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe are effected by the supreme soul through Prakṛiti which is always subordinate to him by controlling it¹ and not by Prakṛiti acting independently of him². Even the social order of the four castes is established by the Supreme Being by regulating the laws of action. It therefore follows that the only reality is the universal spirit which is again identified with the essential self of the individual souls.³ Krishna has therefore taught to Arjuna the doctrine of non-dual monism in two small words "Vāsudevahā Sarvaṃ" i.e. the supreme spirit is all⁴ which clearly mean that the supreme spirit alone is real while every thing else as independent of him is unreal. All this manifold universe is strung on Vāsudeva Krishna as rows of gems upon a thread.⁵

(5) Absolute Idealism and Pantheism.

The doctrine of the organic unity of the world is further taught by Krishna in the following verse⁶ where he says "Undivided yet in beings seeming to dwell divided, supporter of beings too is that which is to be known and is their devourer and begetter." Krishna has further taught that his essential self (Adhyātmam) is identical with the transcendent pure spirit called Akṣaram (imperishable)

1. (9-8, 10) 2. (7-12) 3. (13-2). 4. (7-19) 5. (7-7) 6. (13-16).

Brahman which is not material¹ Therefore the phrase "Vāsudevāha Sarvam" (i.e. the supreme spirit is all²) does not teach the doctrine of pantheism or identification of the supreme spirit with all including even the inanimate nature as wrongly understood by the followers of the school of pure Monism started by Vallabha. The Gītā only teaches the doctrine of absolute idealism as established in the Upanishads according to which there is identity between the essential self of individual souls and that of the supreme soul or Brahman and not between pure spirit or self and Prakṛti (inanimate nature) or not-self which is perishable.³ This conclusion is further supported by the teaching in the following verse⁴ where Krishna says "Know also, me to be Kṣhetrajña (pure spirit) or knower of the field in all fields (which means body evolved of Prakṛti)" Here Krishna does not identify himself with Prakṛti or nature. Gītā therefore teaches only the Upanishadic doctrine of absolute idealism and not pantheism. Accordingly spirit alone whether individual or cosmic is real while the universe of names and forms is not separate from nor independent of the universal spirit. This interpretation of non-dual monism is further supported by the verse⁵ cited below which teaches the worship of Krishna as the supreme spirit and none else as separated or detached from him (Ananya)

(6) The Doctrine of Māyā or Unreality of the world

The doctrine of Maya or unreality of the world follows as a matter of course from the doctrine of non-dual monism as set out above. This doctrine is already found in the Vedas and the Upanishads and particularly in the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad as shown by me while dealing with the subject in the Upanishad period to which the reader's attention is invited. In the Upanishads the word Māyā means illusion or false knowledge ascribing reality to the separate objects of the manifold universe of names and forms as self-subsisting independent units existing by themselves in space separately from the supreme spirit though these are really unreal. This false conception of the world is due to the ignorance of embodied souls as the result of the delusive power (Māyā) of the Lord which veils from them the true knowledge of his essential

nature. In the Gītā, the word Māyā is generally used in this latter sense as meaning the delusive power of the Lord as appears from the following verses "The Lord, oh Arjuna dwells in the heart of every being and by his delusive power spins round all beings set on the machine"¹ "For this my divine delusion (Māyā) of the strands of nature is hard to pass, those who take refuge in me alone pass beyond this delusion"² "Though unborn, and immutable in essence, though Lord of beings yet governing nature which is mine I come into being by my delusive power."³ "Veiled by my power of delusion (Yoga-Māyā) I am not light to all; deluded is this world and it does not recognise me as unborn and immutable"⁴ Shankarāchārya however sometimes uses the word (Māyā) as equivalent to ignorance where the individual falsely attributes existence to the objects of experience Though this view of the illusion or unreality of the universe gets direct support from the Upanishads as also the Gītā yet Gītā generally uses the term Māyā in the sense of delusive power of the Lord as stated above and not as identical with Prakṛiti or Avidyā However it may be stated here that Avidyā or ignorance of the individual is the result of the delusive power of the Lord who alone is not subject to it as he is always omniscient The Lord according to Gītā controls and directs Prakṛiti (nature) which functions objectively in the universe and subjectively in the individual souls⁵ but He is concealed from man though he dwells in them on account of Avidyā or ignorance.

(7) Prakṛiti is the Creative medium of God.

Pure spirit whether cosmic or individual according to the doctrine of the Gītā is never a doer but a principle of pure consciousness and a knower (Kshetrajña)⁶ only Action therefore is relegated to Prakṛiti the lower nature of the supreme being The Universal Soul as a self conscious spirit is distinguished from his lower nature called Prakṛiti as also the migrating soul He is omniscient knowing all while the individual soul is ignorant⁷ The supreme celestial person (Parama Purusha) is thus described⁸ 'This Ancient seen the director and ordainer of all, glorious with ever lasting intelligence, beyond the darkness.' He is always the Lord

1. (18-61) 2. (7-14) 3. (4-6). 4. (7-25) 5. (9-10). 6. (13-2).
7. (7-26). 8. (8-9)

and master and never a servant. Therefore Krishna delegates the act of creation to his lower nature called Prakriti which is the creative medium or the law of the Supreme Being and is unseen except by the effects. Prakriti as the creative medium of the Lord cannot therefore be identified with the supreme being as creation is only one of his innumerable glories. The supreme being is the causeless cause of this universe while Prakriti is the creative medium thereof through which God creates or rather manifests what was unmanifest before. The supreme being never works directly but only through Prakriti or life energy as its medium or agent which creates this universe under divine guidance and control.¹ Prakriti or nature is the womb that holds while the supreme soul is the father that gives the seed.² Prakriti is sometimes called Swabhava or law, as in the verse³ "Nor power of works does the mighty Lord create nor the world's works nor union of works with fruit. It is Swabhava or law that comes forth to action." Now just as law cannot exist apart or separate from the law giver, in the same way Prakriti or nature cannot exist separately from its Lord who controls it.

(8) Prakriti Constitutes the Law of Causation

The whole phenomenal world of names and forms consisting of gods, men, animals, vegetables and inanimate objects of nature is subject to the law of causation which is universal. Therefore effect is always preceded by a cause. Every effect is potential in cause which must materialise as effect. Effect is the necessary consequence of the cause. If a certain cause is set in motion the effect will have to equal the cause. The law of causation has its full play in the world of nature and men. The law is also expressed in the form that action and reaction are equal and opposite. The Karmic law of action is also another form of the same law. This law is traced to Prakriti which is the source of all action. All activities are traced to Prakriti or nature in the form of receptive mind which is subordinate to the self-conscious spirit which controls the mind. The following extracts will clearly show that according to the doctrine of the Gita, Prakriti or nature is the cause of actions or works. "Every man is caused to work perforce by the strands

born of nature '1 " In the production of effects and causes, nature is said to be the cause '2 " Entirely by the strands of nature are works done, he whose self is deluded by egoism, thinks 'I am the doer.' '3 " He who sees that works are done altogether by nature and that Ātman or self works not, he sees indeed '4 " When the beholder sees no worker other than strands and knows Him who is higher than the strands he enters into my being.' '5 In short it may be stated that actions are done as the result of a definite law which is guided and controlled by the spirit who is not a doer but a knower only. Action is the concrete materialisation in an objective form of a concept which is only set in motion or incited by the self-conscious principle called spirit.

V. Psychology.

(1) Nature of Empiric Soul.

The individual soul is identical with the supreme soul from an ontological point of view so far as the essential spiritual self is concerned but from an empirical point of view the embodied soul which is made up of body, mind and senses is subordinate to the supreme soul.⁶ This forms the subject matter of rational psychology. The various evolutes of nature giving rise to body, mind and organs give rise to the individual soul who presides the Sanghāta (combination) made up of the evolutes of nature with the addition of desire, hate, pleasure, pain, association, intelligence and constancy.⁷ The embodied soul consists of three parts viz, gross body made up of the elements, subtle body made up of five senses of knowledge, five senses of action, intellect, individuation and mind and a causal body which is the substrate of actions, and certain Vāsauās or impressions which lead to his rebirths and migrations in this world. The embodied soul is (Ansha) part of the Lord i.e. he is under the Lord's control as the latter has no parts. He attracts the mind and the five senses which rest in nature.⁸ " When the individual soul Ishvara i.e. Lord of the body, acquires a body and also when he ascends therefrom he seizes these i.e. the mind and the senses and goes on his way i.e. migrates in this world by deaths and rebirths) as

1. (1-5) 2. (13-20) 3. (3-27). 4. (13-29) 5. (14-19).
6. (15-7) 7. (13-5, 6) 8. (15-7)

the wind carries scents from their resting place "1 The embodied soul is born in this world to enjoy the fruits of the deeds, good or bad done by him in the former life which need their requital by fresh experiences. The empiric soul goes on migrating in this world by taking repeated births until he gets emancipation by spiritual knowledge.

(2) Empiric soul as doer and enjoyer

The empiric soul consisting of body, senses, and mind having the supreme soul as its center is enveloped in ignorance and he treats the world of appearance as reality and is devoid of all spiritual knowledge. He has no sense of discrimination between self and not-self or spirit and Prakriti. He therefore attributes the qualities of Prakriti to spirit and of spirit to Prakriti. Thus he identifies himself with Prakriti and body which is its product and attributes the agency of works to himself although it belongs to Prakriti and as a result he feels himself happy or miserable " It is stated in the Gita that " Prakriti or nature is the cause in the production of effects and causes, while Purusha or the embodied soul is the cause in the enjoyment of pleasure and pain " The above two truths viz, the agency of all works and the enjoyment of worldly joys and sorrows constitute the nature of the empiric soul thus distinguishing him from the supreme soul who is neither an agent doing work nor an enjoyer of worldly joys and sorrows.

(3) Release by knowledge of the field (Kshetra) and the fieldknower (Kshetrajna)

"The supreme person in this body is called the spectator, the approver, the sustainer, the experiencer, the great Lord and also the Highest self"4 The supreme soul is identical with the self-conscious principle within a man which constitutes his true personality. He is a spectator of all the actions done by the empiric soul and is his guide, friend and philosopher and saves him from a fall provided he listens to the inner voice by having a receptive mind and is not obsessed by the glittering glamour of the worldly drama of appearances performed by Prakriti or nature. The cause of migrations and rebirths in bodies high and low of the empiric souls, is their attachment to the strands (gunas) of nature. A proper knowledge therefore of Purusha

or Kshetrajna (supreme soul) and Kshetra (Pakṛiti) leads a man to release from rebirths and emancipation¹

(4) Free and bound Souls.

True freedom consists in having spiritual knowledge of our true being which constitutes the summum bonum of life, or emancipation. The real cause of suffering in this world is ignorance of the nature of our true being and of philosophical knowledge of the exact relations subsisting between the supreme self, nature and man. According to the Gītā there is no difference in the essential nature of the self of the individual soul and the supreme soul. It is only our ignorance that makes such a difference. The embodied soul from a philosophical standpoint is no other than the supreme soul in so far as his inner spiritual self is concerned and the knowledge of the identity of the spiritual self of the individual soul and the supreme soul and of the organic unity of the whole cosmos as having its true being in the spiritual self as the only reality, frees him from the coils of nature and makes him a free soul². But the same embodied soul becomes bound if he is attached to nature and the three strands of nature and being obsessed and overpowered by nature, he wrongly identifies himself with the lower nature and believes that he is the agent of works and feels himself happy in worldly pursuits and sensual objects.³

VI. Eschatology.

(i) Paths of the Fathers (Pitṛiyāna) and the Gods (Devayāna).

Gītā follows the Eschatological systems of the Upanishads regarding the state of persons after death. Thus Gītā describes the two paths of Fathers (Pitṛiyāna) and Gods (Devayāna) as shown in the Upanishads by which the souls of persons who do pious works here and of those who know the Supreme Being or who worship him by devotion travel after death to the moon and to the world of Brahman respectively. The souls of virtuous people depart from this world by the path of the Fathers from where they are reborn in this world after enjoying the fruit of their virtue for such period as their merit is not exhausted in the world of the Fathers or the Heaven. The souls of those who depart by the path

1. (13-23, 13-34) 2. (13-34, 14-26); 3. (14-5).

of Gods to the world of Brahman are never reborn here. These two paths are thus described in the Gītā — "For these two ways the bright (the path of Gods) and the dark (the path of the Fathers) are held to be the worlds eternal ways by the one man goes not to return here by the other he returns again to this world"¹. The author of the Gītā accepts the theory of the Upanishads as regards the details of the different places of abode in the above two paths.

(2) Atmospheric and Nether worlds (Hell)

Gītā adds certain new theories in the eschatological system of the Upanishads which may be summarised as follows. There are some persons who depart on death neither by the path of the Fathers nor by the path of the Gods. Their souls enter the intermediate atmospheric world (Bhuvn-loka) where they remain as disembodied ghosts (Preta) on account of the neglect of their funeral obsequies (Shrāddha) and other ceremonies by their children and descendants. The deceased fathers who are deprived of the funeral offerings of food and water (Pinda-udak) may also fall to lower states². These disembodied ghosts haunt the people dwelling in this world. There is also another place of destination called Hell (Naraka) which falls to the lot of the sinners and the wicked³. These are provided with a special body of woe in the hell and there they suffer age-long torment till they are reborn. Krishna hurls these wicked men to the regions below this earth (Pātāla) etc. which are inhabited by devils and monsters. Devilish men are hurled down for ever into devilish wombs (Āsuri Yoni)⁴. Different fruits are awarded according to the objects worshipped. Thus those who worship the devas or the gods will go to the devas and their character will be divine; those who worship the Fathers will enter the realms of Fathers, those who worship Ghosts will find a place among ghosts, while those who worship Krishna as the universal spirit or supreme divinity enter into his being and obtain emancipation⁵.

(3) The Doctrine of Transmigration

The above doctrine which had been definitely started in the Upanishads has been followed in the Gītā. According to this

doctrine when a man dies, his soul which is enveloped in a subtle body passes after some time into another body leaving off his gross body as a man casts off worn-out clothes and puts on new ones.¹ His rebirth takes place in a body which corresponds exactly with the deeds done by him in the previous life. If he has done virtuous deeds in the former life he is born in high castes, while if he has done wicked acts he is born in low castes or in bodies of animals and even plants. This process of repeated rebirths and deaths goes on until he obtains emancipation by spiritual knowledge. This doctrine of repeated births which is known as the doctrine of transmigration of the soul is based on the law of cause and effect. It is the cardinal doctrine of the Gītā.² Those who have done righteous acts travel on death by the path of the Fathers to the moon where they enjoy the realm of the Fathers or heaven for a certain period varying with the deeds done by them and on the expiry of the said period they are reborn here to enjoy the fruit of the remnant of the deeds done by them in the past life as a second requital. The cause of rebirths and transmigration is attachment to the strands (gunas) of nature.³ Those who rest in purity (Satva) go upwards and become gods. If they rest in energy (Rajas) they are born as men and if in ignorance (Tamas) they are born as animals or in lower regions.⁴ According to Gītā rebirth also depends on the last thoughts of a man at the time of death.⁵ If he remembers Kṛishna at the time of death he comes to his being.⁶ If persons who have done pious deeds have a fall while on the way to Gods, after dwelling there for some time they are reborn in the house of the pure and the wealthy,⁷ until they achieve final emancipation.

VII. Emancipation.

(1) Positive Conception of Emancipation.

Emancipation or release from the endless rounds of births in this mortal world of restless desires was the summum bonum of life and it meant a state of immortality (Amṛtatva).⁸ The conception of emancipation or liberation in the Gītā is positive unlike that of the Buddhists whose conception was negative. The word for

1 (2-22) 2. (2-27, 4-5). 3 (13-21) 4. (14-18). 5. (8-6). 6. (8-5).
7. (6-41). 8. (2-15)

emancipation in Buddhist literature was Nirvāna which meant an entry into an indefinite abyss of Void (Shunya). The state of Emancipation in the Gītā on the other hand is positive and it means perfect peace (paramam Shantim),¹ the calm of Brahman (brahman Nirvānam)² and endless and absolute pleasure in contrast with the Absolute.³ It also means a release from evil.⁴ It is a place from which there is no return⁵ or rebirth.⁶ The embodied one is freed from birth, death decay and pain, and attains the immortal.⁷

(2) Different forms of emancipation

(a) Oneness with the Supreme Being

According to Upanishads the highest conception of emancipation is to become one with Brahman and we find the same idea in Gītā.⁸ The state of such a soul is thus described in the Gītā "Becoming Brahman he is serene not grieving nor desiring, regarding all beings alike he wins to the highest devotion towards Krishna."⁹ The state of oneness of the released soul with the supreme being is also expressed as entry into Krishna as being.¹⁰

(b) Emancipation as an Eternal and Immutable Abode

There is also another conception of emancipation in the Gītā as an eternal and immutable abode (Akshara Dhāma), from which there is no return.¹¹ It is an intellectual restive place and an abode of eternal peace and joy.¹² The term abode is used in the sense of the universal goal of life and not as a place of habitation. In the Rig Veda the highest abode of Vishnu is the mysterious heaven which is concealed from the view of ordinary persons. It is full of nectar and honey. It is the transcendental form of the highest deity. It is called the highest place of immortality and eternal joy. No Sun or Moon nor fire can illuminate it as it is self illuminating.¹³ This is also considered to be the highest place of refuge even of Krishna as a conditioned God.¹⁴ Thus the conditioned form of Krishna has its ultimate destination in the Akshara Brahman which is transcendent and in which the former has its being while the latter has an abode in Krishna as

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| 1. (6-15). | 2. (2-72 5-24 23 26). | 3. (6-21 28) | 4. (0-1). |
| 5. (5-17 8-21). | 6. (18-12 14-20). | 7. (14-20). | 8. (5-24 17-8) |
| 9. (18-54) | 10. (4-10 8-5 and 14-19 18-55). | 11. (8-21 18-56) | |
| 12. (18-54 56 62). | 13. (15-6) | 14. (15-6). | |

immanent Lord and incarnation of the Supreme Being as appears from the verse cited below.¹ The immanent aspect of the Supreme Being regulates and controls this manifest universe. This would go to show that the transcendent Brahman (attributeless) is the same as the immanent Brahman (with attributes) without any difference in their integral unity. There is complete identity between the impersonal (para Akshara) and the personal (para Purusha) Supreme Being and there is no question of any superiority or inferiority between these two aspects of the same Supreme Being as wrongly understood in certain schools of philosophy. Thus Purushottama or Paramātmā the supreme person² is the same as Para Akshara or Para Avyakta (the supreme immutable and unmanifest).³ There is impersonality within the personal and personality within the impersonal supreme being which always go together and which can never be separated. Gītā mentions both the above aspects of the Supreme Being to give a complete view of the integral unity of the Absolute which is the highest ontological object and the goal of all philosophical inquiry. Lord Kṛṣṇa again describes emancipation as an entry into his being which is both conditioned in this manifest world and also unconditioned the latter constituting his real nature.⁴

(c) Approach to the Highest Divinity for eternal comradeship

In the Gītā we also find passages wherein emancipation is described as an approach to the Highest Being for eternal companionship with him of ordinary persons who could not realize their oneness with the Supreme Being and were not fitted to become one with Brahman, as will appear from the following verses: "To Brahman alone the sacrificer will approach who contemplates the sacrifice as Brahman".⁵ "That man at the time of going hence, (i.e. dying) with mind unwavering, endued with devotion and by the power of control, setting the breath rightly between the eye-brows goes to the supreme celestial person (Divyam Puruṣham)"⁶ "Having approached the celestial person who is again identified with Kṛṣṇa great souls win not rebirth which is the abode of misery and impermanence."⁷

1. (14-27);

2. (15-17),

3. (8-20, 21);

4. (18-55).

5. (4-24);

6. (8-10),

7. (8-15).

(3) Means to emancipation

Different means are laid down in the Gītā for achieving emancipation, of which the most important is knowledge being the immediate cause of emancipation while others are the mediate causes. Gita lays down three paths viz., right work, devotion, and knowledge as means to emancipation. These are included in the two methods of Sākhya (knowledge) and Yoga (action) as pointed out in the verses noted below¹. Devotion is included in the path of right action without desire for fruit (Karma Yoga)². All these methods viz. action, devotion and knowledge are important and useful in their own ways to contribute to the ultimate end of emancipation. A balanced relationship is however required to be preserved between these three methods. Thus the man of knowledge is expected to work in a spirit of control and to have staunch devotion towards Krishna³. Similarly the devotion of Krishna's votaries who are dear to him is not divorced from the elements of right renunciation and knowledge otherwise isolated devotion would be unsubstantial ecstasy⁴. So the work and knowledge of a perfect Yogi or ascetic are not separated from devotion⁵.

Knowledge (Jñāna)

Of all the means to emancipation knowledge is the highest. Gītā throughout lays special stress on the value of knowledge as a very important means which directly leads to emancipation. 'The sacrifice of knowledge is better than material sacrifices.'⁶ 'Having gained knowledge one comes right soon to the highest peace.'⁷ 'Knowing me Krishna the great Lord of all the worlds and friend of all, one reaches peace.'⁸ Knowledge which is the direct cause of emancipation is not the ordinary cognitive knowledge savouring of duality but it is intuitional knowledge accompanied with direct experience. It is therefore told by Krishna to Arjuna. "He would declare the most mysterious knowledge (Jñāna) together with intuitional experience (Vijnāna) a knowledge of which leads to release from evil"⁹. This knowledge also leads to immortality or deathlessness¹⁰ and freedom from rebirths.¹¹

1. (8-8 and 5-4 5) 2. (6-47 12-2) 3. (7-17) 4. (12-18 to 20),
5. (6-46, 47), 6. (4-33) 7. (4-39) 8. (5-29) 9. (9-1) 10. (18-12) 11. (18-23).

Devotion (Bhakti)

Devotion is the next important means to emancipation. It may be either to the personal Lord or the impersonal supreme self. Both these methods of devotion lead to emancipation¹ But Krishna recommends the method of devotion to himself as a personal Lord in preference to the worship of the unmanifest, being the easier of the two methods² Krishna further teaches to Arjuna that by undivided devotion to his universal form as shown in the eleventh chapter, he could be known truly, seen, and entered into.³ Krishna further points out that he is won by divine grace which is conferred by him upon all those who do works placing implicit faith in him.⁴

Action (Karma).

Action is the next means to emancipation. It should be however right work done without desire for fruit and be accompanied with devotion⁵ According to Gītā, the method of even mere abandonment of the fruit of work in a spirit of devotion to the Lord is better than mere meditation that rejects all loving service⁶ Benevolent and Austere works done in a spirit of sacrifice are always encouraged as preparatory means to emancipation. A life of total inaction is repugnant to the Gītā.⁷ Gītā always urges on men to discharge well the duties imposed upon them in a spirit of sacrifice, and renunciation of attachment as valuable aid to achieve the true end of man's life.⁸

VIII. Ethics of the Gītā.

(1) Relation of action and knowledge.

I have already pointed out above that according to Gītā there are only two paths viz. the path of knowledge (Sāṅkhya) and the path of action (Yoga) which lead to emancipation. These two paths are complementary like theory and practice. Both co-operate and are useful in achieving the final end of a man's life. Action is outward while knowledge is inward. Action is however only a preparatory means which qualifies a man for spiritual knowledge. The latter alone directly leads to emancipation. Action is only a means to the end but not the end in itself. Knowledge

1 (1-2, 7), 2 (1-2-3) 3 (11-54, 8-22), 4 (18-56, 18-62), 5 (3-19, 6-12); 6 (12-12) 7 (12-17, 3-5, 8), 8 (13-35; 18-45, 47, 49, 56, 58).

on the other hand teaches us the true nature of our own being i.e. our real self which is constituted a emancipation. Emancipation is not something outside of our true spiritual self. Gita teaches us that all action is done by Prakriti or our lower nature and not by our true self which is a knower and witness only.¹ It is only a false sense of egoism that leads one to identify his body and mind with his true self and hence his bondage. Gita therefore teaches at the very outset the important lesson that all worldly objects are born of Prakriti or the lower nature and are false and unreal and one should never be deluded by them.² It is only knowledge of our true spiritual self and the knowledge that the self is only a knower and not a doer that will destroy the binding power of Prakriti. Actions done with such knowledge are sanctified and burnt in the altar of knowledge.³

(2) Denouncement of total inaction

The extreme speculations in the Upanishads led to a tendency of total abandonment or renunciation of all works. A further impetus was given to this tendency by an increasing fear of transmigration of the soul in endless cycles of births and deaths in this mortal world full of miseries and of the horrors of metempsychosis. This led to a school of philosophers who preached the doctrine of extreme asceticism and total abandonment of all works as the only means of liberation and release from rebirths in this world. Total abandonment of all works was however physically impossible in the nature of things as certain acts were always necessary for the maintenance and upkeep of one's body and soul together. Therefore Gita has denounced total inaction as impossible in the nature of things.⁴ Krishna has taught that "whenever right declines and wrong prevails he takes incarnations from time to time in bodily forms for protecting the virtuous and destroying the wicked and for establishing Virtue and law"⁵ and he further adds that "if he neglected work, the world would fall in ruin"⁶. Thus even Lord Krishna's own life and conduct was a sufficient lesson to confute the doctrine of total inaction.

(3) Denouncement of Actions with Desire

Krishna further attacks certain schools of Mimāṃsakas who taught the doctrine of works with a desire for rewards as heaven

1 (3-27 13-29) 2. (2-14 3-31) 3. (4-23 37)
4. (2-47 3-5 8, 18-11) 5 (4-7 8) 6 (3-24).

material prosperity etc, by preaching his new doctrine of Karma Yoga. Gītā speaks with contempt of those, who offer Vedic sacrifices to different Gods with the sole motive of enjoying the pleasures of paradise after death without any other aim of life¹ It teaches the Upanishad doctrine that heavenly world does not bring permanent happiness, nor is heaven permanent. The persons who are rewarded with a celestial abode as the fruit of sacrifices and other pious deeds done by them, are reborn in this mortal world as soon as their merit is exhausted²

(4) Doctrine of Karma-Yoga or action without desire.

Gītā for the first time taught the doctrine of right action without desire which practically revolutionized the current modes of thought and proved a healthy corrective to the existing views of total renunciation and abandonment of all actions. By his theory of Karma Yoga, Krishna taught that any work including even Vedic sacrifices and duties of castes binds a man to rebirth if it is done with a desire for reward. He has given two new definitions of Yoga or right action. The word Yoga is derived from the root 'Yuj' to unite and it means union of the individual soul with the supreme soul. But in the Gītā the word Yoga is generally used in the technical sense of control or balance of character which leads to union with the supreme being. Krishna at first defines Yoga as control or balance of mind by which one views success and failure as alike³. Then he gives another definition of Yoga as skill in work or practice of discernment without desire.⁴ By the first definition, Krishna teaches the method of control over all the three functions of the mind, viz reason, will and emotion which constitute the whole personality of a man. While by the second definition he teaches the doctrine of duty without desire and for the sake of duty.

(5) Practice of self control and work with Detachment.

The Yoga method of work (Karma Yoga) as taught by Krishna thus included the practice of self control and moral discipline and the practice of discernment of work in a spirit of utter detachment from the result of work

1. (2-42 to 46). 2. (9-21), 3. (2-48); 4. (2-50).

By the practice of discipline one controls the movements of his body, mind, and senses and re-trains them from wandering among sense objects. The true Karma Yogi looks upon all external objects with complete indifference. These are born of the 3 strands of lower nature and are unreal. The objects do not hinder the Yogi nor they excite feelings of pain and pleasure or any passions. His senses are entirely removed from sense objects just as the limbs of a tortoise are withdrawn within its shell.¹ The objects are brought under his complete subjugation and control together with the wandering mind by long practice. By practice of self control he views alike success and failure which are the fruit of work.² In short he is able to regulate all his actions by controlling his desires, thoughts and feelings with a balanced mind. The Yoga method of work taught by Krishna also included the practice of discerning work without desire done in a spirit of complete detachment. This was a great improvement on the Vedic religion. It frees a man's mind from the state of illusion and delusion created by the various sacrificial actions and the varying fruits thereof as taught in the Vedas. The new method of work known as Yoga presents a strong contrast to the old method of work in the Vedic times by its insistence on resoluteness and fixity of purpose. There is no uncertainty or vagueness in the Yoga method. The object and purpose of work was also definite viz. the realisation of the supreme being, the highest goal of human life. The Vedas on the other hand by their promises of different rewards in the heaven which was only temporary as the fruit of different works puzzled the minds of ordinary persons doing the said works both as regards the method as also the object of work and fostered a spirit of utter selfishness. Krishna does not blame the Vedas but he only blames the wrong understanding of the persons doing Vedic works about the true significance of the latter and even uses rather strong language towards them.³ Krishna by his new teaching of the method of Yoga gave an altogether new interpretation of works, which was a great improvement upon the older methods. Krishna urges Arjuna to rise superior to the old teaching and give up all desire for wealth and material things, and seek after a higher and all-inclusive knowledge of the supreme end of a man's life which

1 (2-58).

2. (2-38).

3. (2-42 43 44).

secured deliverance from this transitory world. Krishna taught Arjuna and through him to all mankind to follow the path of duty for the sake of duty as such even at the cost of one's life and without any regard to the fruits thereof¹ He further teaches that all works should be accompanied with knowledge and devotion to Krishna and dedicated to him as sacrifice Krishna asks Arjuna to cast off all works done by him as an agent for the Lord's sake on Krishna and fix his thoughts on the essential self as manifested in Krishna and fight without any idea of 'I' or 'mine.'² All men act according to the tendencies of their own nature being prompted by likes and dislikes of objects of the senses. These block one's path Krishna therefore teaches that one should not fall under their sway³ To counteract the evil effects of these two enemies of men viz., likes for what is agreeable and dislikes for what is disagreeable, Krishna teaches Arjuna to follow the path of duty "Better a man's own duty (Swadharma) though ill done than another's duty well performed Better it is to die in one's own duty, another's duty is fraught with danger"⁴

By following the method of Karma Yoga or right action as summarised above, one becomes qualified for the higher paths of devotion and knowledge. It is stated "he who dedicates works to Brahman or the supreme spirit abandoning attachment and works, is not smeared by sin as a lotus leaf by water"⁵ Even ascetics do work abandoning attachment to purify their selves⁶ Work therefore without desire is useful for purification of the mind If a man does work by the method of Yoga as taught by Krishna without attachment he gains the highest fruit⁷ It is further stated "he who is engaged in the practice of works with control, abandoning their fruit wins to final peace, while he who shuns the above practice and is attached to fruit by the promptings of desire is bound"⁸ "Even a very little of this doctrine of moral virtue and discipline delivers one from the great fear of the rounds of births and deaths"⁹ After the lower self is once controlled, the Karma Yogi who follows the method of work as taught by Krishna scaling the heights of control, he will reach a state of comparative calm wherein work will be less and devote himself more

1 (2-40, 3-35). 2 (3-30) 3 (3-34) 4 (3-35) 5 (5-10) 6. (5-11).
7. (3-19). 8. (5-12). 9 (2-40).

to meditation and contemplation of the supreme being as means to final emancipation.¹

(6) The cause of sin

Krishna further explains the knotty problem of the cause of sin and why a man is led to commit sin. He states that the cause of sin is to be found in nature (Prakriti) or not-self in the form of desire for what is pleasant and reluctant for what is unpleasant.² "Both desire and wrath are caused by the strand of energy (laya) when it is predominated by restless activity. Thus twin passions obscure all knowledge like smoke that hides the fire, dirt that clouds the mirror and the water membrane that conceals the lotus. It devours like a terrible fire."³ This twin passion has its seat in senses, mind and reason which are all products of nature (Prakriti) or not-self or its three strands (gunas) which delude a man clouding knowledge.⁴ The must be conquered at the very outset by "self-control,"⁵ by the man aspiring after self-realisation as the goal of his life. It is only when the highest spiritual self steadies and controls the lower self of man that desire and wrath the cause of sin can be conquered. It is said "Desire, wrath and greed this is the triple gate of hell destructive of the self. Therefore the one who must abandon."⁶ Every man has two selves viz. a spiritual or higher self which is the conscious principle and a natural self or lower self in the form of subconscious mind which is the product of Prakriti or lower nature and is the medium of all work. If the lower self is submissive and remains under the control and guidance of the higher self and listens to the inner Voice of the latter, the former is a friend of the latter but if the lower self is rebellious and refuses to listen to the inner Voice and its advice it is its enemy.⁷ This will now explain the significance of the teaching "self alone is friend of self and self alone is enemy of self."⁸ Therefore Krishna lays great stress on cultivating the practice of self control in his doctrine of Karma Yoga. It is only when the lower self is conquered that peace reigns and a man is fitted for the higher path of devotion and spiritual knowledge. This

1 (6-3) 2 (3-37). 3 (3-38-39). 4 (3-40). 5 (3-43). 6 (10-21).
 7 (6-0). 8 (6-5).

teaching is too high for Arjuna who therefore asks the Lord how can an ordinary person whose mind is prone to wander riotous, violent, stubborn and hard to check, hope to attain such tranquility and control?¹ Lord Krishna admits the difficulty but says that by repeated practice and conquest of desire (Varāgya) the mind can be subdued. Effort will conquer and control the thoughts provided the aspirant follows the method taught by him.²

(7) Sacrificial Acts.

Sacrificial acts formed part of the daily routine of the Vedic religion. They were obligatory acts which were enjoined by the holy texts. A wider meaning was however given to the word 'sacrifice' in the Gītā. In the Vedas, sacrifices meant the acts and ceremonies of offering oblations whether of animals or vegetables in the holy altar of fire. Sacrificial acts were however done with desire for reward in the heaven. Thus it is stated "This world is bound by the bonds of work, save where that work is done for sacrifice, work to this end, do thou perform, O son of Kuntī, freed from attachment"³ Here looking to the context, one finds that the word sacrifice was used in the sense of fire sacrifice as in the Vedas. But Krishna enlarges the meaning of the word sacrifice so as to include therein all philanthropic and benevolent actions done for sacrifice without attachment and desire. "If a man be free from attachment × × and act for sacrifice then his work is entirely dissolved"⁴ Therefore "If any action be done for sacrifice, it is no work at all and is burnt in the fire of knowledge just as fuel is burnt to ashes in the ordinary fire"⁵ Krishna further teaches that sacrifice of knowledge is better than material sacrifices without knowledge and that every work without exception comes to complete fulfilment in knowledge"⁶ Therefore all acts must be dedicated to the Lord with full knowledge that the spiritual self is actionless and that the latter keeps his thoughts controlled. He is therefore freed from the notion "I am doing work." Work is done by the lower nature (Prakṛiti) or the subconscious mind which controls the lower self of man and not by the higher self which is conscious and spiritual. He who realises this truth and contemplates that his real self is not doing work

finds ultimate release by realising his oneness with the supreme being and though he is engaged in sacrificial work it is no work at all being burnt up in the fire of knowledge and such work has then no binding effect. It is further stated in the Gita that sacrificial works including benevolent and philanthropic acts should not be abandoned equally with gifts and austerities but they must be done to purify the thoughts of men.¹

Though Krishna has enlarged the scope of sacrifices, he has at the same time not underrated the value and importance of fire sacrifices. The relation between the gods of heaven and men is based on sacrifices.² Sacrificial offerings presented to the gods by men brought in return the gift of food.³ As body could not be sustained without food which again depended on the favour of gods, sacrificial work is of great importance.⁴ The whole order of creation turns on sacrifice. From the one imperishable (Akshara) Absolute, proceeds Prakriti, lower nature or not-self whose function is activity.⁵ By lower nature are done⁶ all works including even sacrifices. It is only in response to sacrifice that the gods send rain by which man gets food to keep him alive. Thus the whole cycle of creation turns continuously on the work of sacrifice.⁷ One therefore cannot afford to neglect sacrificial works which are most important.

(8) Duties relating to the four castes (Chāturvarṇa)

The caste order is of divine institution and is traced as such so far back as the Rig Veda. This principle is recognised in the Gita in which Lord Krishna says "The order of the four castes i.e. *Chāturvarṇa* was created by Him with due regard to the principle of distribution of nature and works."⁸ The four castes are Brahmins (priestly class), Kshatriyas (warrior class), Vaisya (merchant class) and Sudras (artisans and servant class). It is therefore wrong to suggest as is done by some modern reformers that the institution of the four castes was an innovation introduced in later times by Brahmins for selfish purposes nor is it correct to say that according to the Gita the caste of a man is determined not by birth but by the qualities and actions of a man in this life. Krishna distinctly says as an incarnation of the highest divinity that it was the supreme deity who

created the four castes by giving birth to each man in such family in society as accords with his deeds in previous life. Krishna is opposed to all idea of intermingling or confusion of castes (*Varnasankara*) at one's desire though he may fancy that by his superior qualifications he was more fitted to fulfil the duty of a higher caste than that in which he is placed by God as would appear from the following teaching of Krishna "Better a man's own duty though ill done than another's duty well performed, better it is to die in one's own duty. Another's duty is fraught with dread, (i.e. leads to hell)".¹ Similarly mixture of blood of different castes by inter marriages (*Varnasankara*) is denounced in the Gītā as in the law books (*Dharma Shāstras*) as would appear from the following verses — "When lawlessness prevails O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt, when women are corrupted, there appears caste confusion (caused by intermarriages)"² "To hell does this confusion lead the family and those who slay it, for when the ritual offerings of rice and water (i.e. in the Śrādhā or ancestor worship ceremonies) fail, the deceased Fathers fall degraded".³ By these sins of those who slay the family which cause the intermingling of the castes are brought to naught the everlasting law of clan and family".⁴ It is therefore a great sin according to Gītā to confound the duties of castes by intermingling them. Krishna insists on the observance of caste duties (*svadharma*). Devotion to caste duties leads to perfection, provided this be performed in a spirit of true renunciation and as an offering to God.⁵ Though the perfection of duty be imperfect yet the duty must be done, as a duty and in a disinterested manner. "Better is one's own duty (though destitute of merits) than the duty of another well performed. Doing the duty ordained according to his nature one incurs no sin."⁶ His work counts as no work. "He thus reaches perfection which leads him to final emancipation."⁷ Gītā makes a clear distinction of the duties appertaining to the four castes distributed according to the three qualities of nature, purity (*satwa*) energy (*Rajas*) and darkness (*tamas*).⁸ Thus the quality of purity predominates in a Brāhmin, that of energy predominates in Kshatriyas, purity being subordinate. The quality of energy and darkness, energy predominating, prevails in the

1 (3-35). 2 (1-41) 3 (1-42) 4 (1-43) 5 (18-45, 46) 6. (18-47).
7. (18-45) 8. (18-41)

Vaishya while that of darkness and energy, darkness being predominant prevails in the Sudra. Therefore each member of the four castes must work according to the predominant quality of the strand in his nature. Thus the duty of a Brahman is to acquire such qualities as restraint, low suffering and uprightness; a Kshatriya must be brave, constant and generous. The Vaishya tills the soil, herds cows and trades while the duty of Sudra is to serve.¹

(9) Moral qualities

Some critics have pronounced an opinion that Indian philosophy was speculative only and it neglected the ethical side altogether. This is however far from truth and I have already pointed out above that from the earliest times beginning with the Rigveda attention was paid to the side of ethics and to the development of moral virtues as truth, uprightness, nobility, etc. The same remarks apply to the Upanishad and the Gita in which we also find special mention made of ethical virtues and the need of their observance as part of one's duty. In the Gita also we find special stress laid on the development of moral virtues as primary means to emancipation. It has been already pointed out above that according to Gītā, the source of evil and sin is traced to the twin passion of love and hatred or likes and dislikes for agreeable and disagreeable objects which again result from the lower nature (Prakṛiti) or not self, of three strands (guṇas). These three strands of nature envelop and cloud spiritual knowledge and thus bind a man like the constituents of a rope. He is therefore driven by natural impulses to achieve his personal happiness and in doing so he does not even hesitate to injure other men. Men have got two natures higher and lower which are called Daivi Saṁspat (divine nature) and Asuri Saṁspat (devilish or animal nature) and they accordingly show virtuous and vicious traits of character respectively. A strange contrast is presented in these two types of persons and their qualities in chapter sixteenth of the Gita. The Divine nature leads to emancipation while the devilish nature strengthens the bonds of continual rebirths. Arjuna is born to the divine nature and he need not therefore fear. It is therefore quite necessary to purge one's mind of devilish tendencies and purify it from

all selfish tendencies resulting from likes and dislikes as mentioned above. Unless this is done, it is impossible to achieve the highest end of life. Gītā therefore enjoins on the purification of mind first negatively by the practice of self control and the Yoga method of right work without desire and then positively by performance of higher kinds of work as sacrifices, gifts and austerities¹. The meaning of 'sacrifice' was enlarged in the Gītā so as to include therein gifts and austerities and all unselfish and disinterested works performed for the good of others. These higher unselfish and disinterested works were necessary and obligatory as means of purification of the Mind and for purging it of all selfish motives which were looked upon as sources of bondage. They were however only means to the end of self realisation and not ends in themselves as stated above. Ethical virtues and altruistic deeds are enumerated in the following three groups in the Gītā.

First group of virtues. (Ch. XII; 13-20)

(1) Friendliness (2) Compassion (3) Long suffering (4) Contentment (5) Self control (6) Firm faith (7) Non-attachment to worldly objects and (8) Purity of life. These traits of Virtues are found in the votaries of Kṛishna who are very dear to him.

Second group of virtues. (Ch. XIII; 7-10)

(1) Modesty (2) Sincerity (3) Harmlessness (4) Long suffering (5) Uprightness (6) Service to the Lord (7) Purity (8) Steadfastness (9) Self restraint (10) Desirelessness (11) Abandonment of the thought of 'I' (12) Perception of evil in birth, death, age, sickness and pain (13) Absence of attachment and excessive love of child, wife, home, and the like (14) a mind held even in even balance, whether a pleasant or unpleasant lot befall (15) Unwavering devotion to the Lord with undivided control (16) Resort to lonely haunts (17) Distaste for the society of men (i.e. seeking the jungle, river bank or a temple etc.) (18) Perseverance in the knowledge of the essential-self (19) Insight into the object of knowledge of the truth. These are the means of knowledge

1. (18-5)

Third group of virtues (Ch XVI, 1-3)

(1) Fearlessness (2) Purity of heart (3) Steadfastness in devotion to knowledge (4) Liberty (5) Self-restraint (6) Sacrifice (7) Duty (8) Austerity (9) Uprightness (10) Humility (11) Truth (12) An even temper (13) Abandonment (14) Quietude (15) An unshaken tongue (16) Tenderness towards beings (17) Freedom from envy (18) Gentleness (19) Modesty (20) Constancy (21) Ardour (22) Long-suffering (23) Fortitude (24) Cleanness (25) Freedom from hatred and arrogance

The above qualities belong to those who are of divine nature.

Group of vices (XVI-4)

(1) Hypocrisy (2) Pride (3) Self-concept (4) Wrath (5) Intolerance and (6) Ignorance. The qualities belong to those who are of devilish or animal nature.

From the above lists of moral virtues it will appear that Gītā has advocated the cultivation of very high moral ideals and the practice of altruistic deeds as means to the realisation of the organic unity of the universe having its being in the supreme soul both transcendent and immanent. Krishna's sympathies are on the side of Dharma (Righteousness) and he constantly urges Arjuna to be virtuous. Krishna takes birth as a human incarnation of Brahman to establish Dharma (law and virtue) whenever wrong prevails. Sin is adharma or defiance of one's own duty (*Sauddharma*) as laid down in the Shāstras (religious books of authority laying down rules of duty) and for which the nature of each man (*Svabhāva*) fits him. Krishna enjoins on Arjuna to follow the dictates of Shāstras as sources of authority and guidance and not the impulses of one's lower nature. The true aim of life, however, is not merely to conquer sin which is only negative and not ultimate being born of Prakṛti or lower nature and its three attitudes which bind the soul to birth by its inherent ignorance. The proper remedy shown by Krishna is to acquire spiritual knowledge of the unity of the world as having its being in the supreme deity where good and evil are both left behind as unreal effects of ignorance.

**(10) Self realisation as the supreme purpose
of Ethics in the Gītā.**

It may be stated in short that the Ethics of the Gītā is not antitheistic in character but it is a part and parcel of the theistic religion of the Gītā. It is however only a means to the end along with devotion and knowledge and not an end in itself as in certain other religions, the supreme end in Gītā being realisation of the universal self (Atman) as the highest purpose and goal of a man's life. Thus we find that the main purpose of the Gītā is not to teach ethics as isolated from religion and philosophy but to serve as a stepping stone to reach the higher goal of life. It is primarily religious and philosophical and it leads to emancipation or perfect freedom as the summum bonum of life without detracting from the utility of ethics and moral virtues which subserve the indirect purpose qualifying a man for reaching the highest goal of life by having a true philosophical knowledge accompanied with devotion to the personal Lord.

CHAPTER VI

DHARMA SĪĀSTRAS.

(1) Early History.

Shortly before the close of the Epic period, we find the revival of Hinduism by the Brahmins to protect their ancient Vedic religion and culture from the onslaughts and attacks of two now heterodox schools of philosophy viz. Buddhism and Jainism that had been started by Gnutama Buddha and Mahavira as a revolt against the Vedic religion, in the sixth century B. C. The founders of these two schools started new religions on account of certain fundamental differences of views with the Hindus following the old Vedic religion. The Hindus following the Brāhmanical religion were therefore compelled to preserve the cardinal dogmas and doctrines of their ancient religion which was attacked by the reformers. There were once in existence thousands of Shakhās (Schools) of the Shruties having their separate text books of the Vedas which were handed down in oral form from preceptor to pupil since generations past in unbroken succession but of which only a few are extant at present. The learned Brāhmins then thought it necessary to abridge the teachings of the Vedas which were preserved by them by long standing traditions as the people had then no time to study the voluminous literature of the Vedas and the Brāhminas. The Vedic literature was thus condensed in the form of Sūtras (short aphorisms). It was with a view to facilitate the teachings of the Vedas that the learned Pandits framed Sūtras or strings of rules chiefly in prose which formed rather a memoria technica by which the substance of the oral lessons might be recalled than regular treatises on the subject. Every department of the Vedas had its own sūtras. This whole literature of Sūtras was called collectively Smṛitis as they were written from memory or by a recollection of the teachings of the Vedas in the several schools which had ceased to exist in course of time. The word Smṛiti however in its technical sense means code of law and

virtue. Some of these Sūtras are so short that it is often difficult to gather their sense without the help of commentaries. The anxiety of the Sūtra writers to abbreviate and condense the sentences of the old religious literature was so great that the saying became proverbial that "An Author rejoiceth in the economising of half a short vowel as much as in the birth of a son".

(2) Dharma Sūtras.

(a) Sūtra literature attached to the Vedas.

The Sūtra literature attached to the Vedas called Angas (subordinate parts) consisted of three parts viz Śrauta Sūtras, Gṛhya Sūtras and Dharma Sūtras. The Śrauta sūtras treated of the details of ceremonies relating to Vedic sacrifices. The Gṛhya sūtras treated of rules of domestic rites and other ceremonies relating to season festivals etc, while the Dharma Sūtras formed the last part of the Sūtras attached to the Vedic literature. They relate to the rules of practical life, virtue and law. The Śrauta Sūtras are classified by Gotama into fourteen principal forms of sacrifices of which the most important was Agnihotra which consisted of a simple oblation of milk offered morning and evening to the holy fire. The holy fire was kindled by a regular ceremony called Agniādhāna accompanied with mantras or recitations from the Vedas. The performance of Agnihotra formed an important part of the daily obligatory duties of every householder belonging to the higher castes along with Sandhyā which consisted of Vedic prayer and the worship of the god sun by chanting the Mantra of Gāyatrī. The Gṛhya sūtras consisted of numerous domestic rites and ceremonies relating to birth (Garbhādhāna), marriage (Vivāha), the initiation or sacred thread ceremony of a student (Upanayana), death and śādhya (funeral obsequies) etc. The above Vedic and domestic rites and ceremonies constituted the forty sacraments of the ancient Hindus. The object of all these sacraments was to purify a man from sins of commission and omission for higher religious purposes of life. The Rishis however who wrote the Dharma Śāstras laid particular stress on the observance of a high moral life which was considered more important than the mere observance of sacraments. Thus Vasistha says "the Vedas do not purify him who is deficient in good conduct though

he may have learnt them all together with the six Angas.¹ "The several texts do not save from sin the deceitful mna who behaves deceitfully"²

(b) Classification of Dharma Sūtras.

The Dharma Sutras related to the rules of practical life, virtue and law. The principal Dharma sutras were composed by Gotama, Bauddhāyana, Āpastambin, Vasistha and Vishnu. Gotama seems to be the oldest of all and belongs to the sixth century B C. The names of the principal authors of secondary Dharma sutras were Hurita, Hiranyakeshin, Ushanas, Yama, Kashyapa and Sankha.

(c) Ethics of The Dharma Sūtras

The Dharma sutras laid particular stress on the ethical side of a man's life as already pointed out above and they laid down strict rules for the observance of good conduct (sadachara) which constituted the primary source of law (Dharma) as laid down in the Smritis (codes of law) compiled later on the earliest being that of Manu.

The authors of the Dharma sutras pointed out that upon a strict observance of Dharma or virtue depended all worldly prosperity and the final beatitude or emancipation which was the summum bonum of human life. Unless a man led a good and moral life, he could not reach the heaven. The birth of a man in this life whether in a good or a bad family, and the enjoyment of happiness and misery here depended on virtue (Dharma) alone. The authors of the Dharma Sutras therefore laid down minute rules containing expositions on virtue and duty whether sacrificial, social, or moral to be observed by a man in the different spheres and relations of life. Far above the performance of different sacrifices as laid down in the Vedas was esteemed the possession of Virtue and goodness which alone led to heaven. It was virtue which held society together and smoothed the path of progress. The roles of a progressive society commended virtue more than the breach of caste rules or the omission of rites. Gotama who was the oldest sutra writer on Dharma (virtue) mentions the following eight good qualities —

1. (V S. 6-8).

2. (V S. 6-5)

(1) Compassion (2) Forbearance (3) Freedom from anger (4) Purity (5) Gentleness (6) The performance of good actions (7) Freedom from avarice and (8) Freedom from covetousness.¹ Gotama concludes his account of the duties of a householder with the following rules :—

- (1) He shall always speak the truth
- (2) He shall conduct himself as becomes Āryan
- (3) He shall instruct virtuous men.
- (4) He shall follow the rules of purification.
- (5) He shall take pleasure in the Veda
- (6) He shall never hurt any being.
- (7) He shall be gentle yet firm and
- (8) He shall ever restrain his senses and be liberal²

Gotama's list of sins which involved loss of caste is very instructive. It runs as follows — (1) Murder (2) Drinking spirituous liquor (3) Violation of a Guru's bed (4) Incest (5) Theft (6) Atheism (7) Persistent repetition of sinful acts (8) Harboursing criminals (9) Abandoning blameless friends (10) Instigating others to sinful acts (11) Associating with out castes (12) Giving false evidence and (13) Bringing false charge etc³. This will give the reader at once an idea as to how lofty were the ideals on ethics of the great Rishis who composed the codes of law and virtue. Vasistha's list of Mahāpatakas or sins is shorter but similar. It runs as follows —

- (1) The Violation of a Guru's bed (2) Drinking of spirituous liquor (3) Murder (4) Theft and (5) Spirituous or matrimonial connection with out castes.⁴

Dr Buhler the translator of Manu Smṛiti has drawn attention to a remarkable passage from Mānava Dharma Sūtra which has been quoted by Vasistha⁵. At present we have no trace of any Dharma Sūtra of Manu though there must have been one in existence as appears from the above reference by Vasistha. At present we have Manu Smṛiti in the form of verses which is our highest authority of great veneration on Dharma (Law and virtue).

1. (G. D. S. 8-23) 2. (G. D. S. 9-68 to 73) 3. (G. D. S. 21-1 to 10).
 4. (V. D. S. 1-19 to 21). 5. (V. D. S. 4-5 to 8).

(3) Dharma Shāstras

(a) Basis of authority of the Smritis

All the groups of laws civil and religious which govern and regulate the life and conduct of the Hindus pass under one term popularly known as Dharma Shāstras which form part of the literature called Smritis and are of divine origin and they are based on Srutis or Revealed Texts. We have seen above that at first Sūtras or short aphorisms were composed by the Rishis to make the understanding of the prescribed ceremonies whether sacrificial or domestic more easy. These sūtras were called Śrauta, Grihya and Dharma Sūtras and they related to sacrificial, domestic and every day life ceremonies and observances. The Dharma sūtras contain detailed rules of conduct and the traditional practices and observances (Sāmāyikachāra) followed by the Āryas in connection with their every day life. The Dharma Sūtras were the latest in date of the three kinds of Sūtras mentioned above. These Sūtras were called by the general term Kalpa Sūtras of which the Dharma Sūtras which were in prose formed the last part.

(b) Subject-matter of Smritis.

Later on, the place of Dharma Sūtras was taken by Smritis or Dharma Shāstras (in verse) which were regular treatises dealing with the laws and rules governing and regulating the life and conduct of the people in general. Elaborate rules relating to the social order of the four castes (*Varnas*) and four stages of life (*Ashramas*) and the duties to be observed by them were laid down. In the Dharma Sūtras as also in the later Dharma Shāstras the social degradation of the Śūdras was clearly marked out. The Śūdras were excluded from the initiation ceremony called Upanayana, or sacred thread ceremony which was reserved only for the three higher castes who were called *Dwijas* or twice born persons. The Śūdras were disqualified from studying the Vedas and Upanishads which was the exclusive right of the *Dwijas* (twice born) only.

The Smritis or Dharma Shāstras consist of three sections called Āchāra, Vyavahāra and Prāyaschitta. The Āchāra section lays down regulations relating to the performance of religious rites and ceremonies and the general duties of all men and women including persons belonging to the four castes.

The Vyavahāra section lays down civil laws relating to the protection of life and property with all their rules and practices. While the Piāyaschitta section lays down rules relating to the atonement for various sins.

(c) Classification of Smritis.

The Dharma shāstra of the Hindus is not one single book but consists of the Samhitās or treatises composed by holy sages numbering twenty according to the list given by Yājñavalkya viz, Manu, Atri, Vishnu, Hārta, Yājñavalkya, Ushana, Anguā, Yama, Āpastambha Samvarta, Kātyayana, Brihaspati, Parāsara, Vyāsa, Sankha, Likhita, Daksha, Gotama, Sātātapa, and Vasistha. Other law givers mention other names of writers of Dharma Shāstras. Thus Parāsara mentions twenty names but instead of Yama, Brihaspati and Vyāsa he mentions the names of Kasyapa, Gaṅgya and Piacheta. The list given above is not exhaustive. Besides the smritis mentioned above there are also many other Smritis which are extant at present.

(d) Principal Smritis.

Manu.

Of all the Smritis *Manu Smṛiti* is regarded next to the Vedas in sanctity. There are Vedic passages which direct that "All that Manu said is medicine"¹. It is the oldest of all the codes of law. Its authorship is attributed to Manu himself the son of, Brahmā. He was the most ancient and the greatest of all law givers. His name is mentioned in the Rig Veda as the ancestor of mankind. The Manu Smṛiti in its present form seems to have been based on Mānava Dharma Sūtras which seem to have been lost and are not available at present. Manu Smṛiti belongs to the Maitrayaniya School of the black Yajurveda. It has great connection with the Mahābhārata and several verses in Manu Smṛiti are also found in the Mahābhārata. Possibly both might have made use of common materials. Dr. Bühler has translated Manu Smṛiti, in the Sacred Books of the East Series, with a most scholarly and exhaustive introduction. He assigns to Manu Smṛiti a date between 200 B. C. to 200 A. D. Manu Smṛiti was in existence much as it is now before the epic was finally redacted in its present form. Sir William Jones has fixed the date of the actual text at about

1. (Ts. 2-2-6-2, Ms. 1-1-5).

1280 B C Schlegel gives the date as 1000 B C These opinions as to the date of Manu Smṛiti not having been founded on any historical or positive proof are mere conjectures and are not conclusive The other Smṛitis next to Manu in date and authority are Yājñavalkya (100 to 300 A D) Nārada (500 to 600 A D) Brhaspati and Kātyāyana (600 to 700 A D)

Yājñavalkya

The arrangement in *Yājñavalkya* is better than in Manu The book is divided into three chapters of about the same length dealing with Āchāra (rules of conduct) Vyavahāra (law) and Prāyascitta (penance) respectively The general outlook of Yājñavalkya is similar to that of Manu and it resembles Manu also in style But there is less elaboration The philosophical tenets as on the fate of soul on death and transmigration are similar to those in Manu

Nārada

Nārada represents an older account of Manu's views than the Manu Smṛiti It particularly deals with several topics of law It cannot be earlier than 500 or 600 A D

Brhaspati and Kātyāyana

Next in importance are *Brhaspati* and *Kātyāyana* which are extant only in fragments They appear to be founded upon Manu with such enlargements and developments as a later form of society demanded They are more advanced in legal views than Nārada Their date may be assigned between 600 and 700 A D

Vasistha

Of other Smṛitis those of Vasistha and Parāshara are important *Vasistha* Smṛiti mentions Manu as an authority while it is quoted in the Manu Smṛiti Kumarila Bhattacharya assigns it to a lost Rig Veda school of the Vasisthas

Parāshara.

Parāshara Smṛiti is particularly meant for the present age of Kali A Parāshara appears as an authority in Yājñavalkya and is cited by Medhatithi but the Parāshara Smṛiti on which Mādhyama (1400 A D) wrote an elaborated comment adding a chapter on law to those on custom and penance in the original is doubtless later than

either of these authors. Both these authors were revered Rishis of good old memory whose names are mentioned in the Vedas and their works are authoritative.¹ It appears from the Mahābhārata that *Parāśara* was the grand son of *Vasistha* and father of *Vyāsa* the author of *Mahābhārata*. The rules laid down in *Parāśara Smṛiti* were not so strict as in *Manu Smṛiti* being meant for the Kaliyuga. The Rishi seems to have presaged the degradation and religiousness of the present times as appears from the following Verses "Religion is conquered by religion, truth by falsehood, kings by thieves and men by women in the Kali Yuga, Agnihotra sacrifices cease to exist, the worship of ancestors and preceptors is extinguished and virgins give birth to children in the Kali Yuga."² The Omniscient Rishi therefore knowing the possibility of an increase in sins and with a view to the purity of life, makes an elaborate provision of Penances to atone for the sins and devotes nine chapters from the fourth to the twelfth, to Penances and rules of purity while the first three chapters deal with rules of good conduct, duties of the four castes and custom and religion which are put on a very broad and practical basis.

(e) Commentaries on Smṛitis.

There are glosses and commentaries on some of the principal Smṛitis. Thus on *Manu* we have the well known commentaries of *Medhātithi*, *Govindarāja*, *Kuluka Bhatta* and others. The most ancient commentary on *Yājñavalkya* is the gloss of *Aparāṅka*. Then comes the celebrated commentary of *Vijñāneshvara* called *Mitākshara*, which constitutes an important treatise on Hindu law. Next to *Manu* and *Yājñavalkya* come *Nārada Smṛiti* and *Parāśara Smṛiti*, the latter being particularly meant for the present age Kaliyuga. There is a commentary of *Asahāya* on *Nārada* while on *Parāśara Smṛiti* there is a scholarly and elaborate commentary known as *Mādhavīya* written by *Mādhava*, the well known minister of *Bukkaraj* the king of *Vijayanagara*.

(f) Compilations and Digests of Law.

The Legislators however did not agree in all respects. They often differed from one another. Hence arose the necessity of a compilation of Digest which after harmonizing the conflicting authorities might lay down the rules to be followed in practice. One

1. (T. S. 3-5-2-5, T. A. 1-1-3-37)

2. (P. S. 1-30, 31).

of the earliest of such digests is Kalpataru of Lakshmidhara (1200 A. D.) Other important Digests are Smṛiti Chandrika of Devanna Bhatta (1200 A. D.) Chatur Varga chintāmaṇi of Hemādri (1300 A. D.) and Madanpārijata of Vishveshvara (1400 A. D.) In the seventeenth century we find the Nirṇaya Sindhu of Kamalākara which is a religious authority in the Marāṭha country and the encyclopaedia Viramitrodya of Mitra Misra. This last work also touches on the doctrine of emancipation.

Mīmāṃsā rules of interpretation.

The authors of the Digests were always guided by Mīmāṃsā rules of interpretation in their opinions. I may mention here the following leading rules of interpretation for information of the reader.

- (1) If there is a contradiction between a Śhruti and a Smṛiti the former is to prevail.¹
- (2) If there is no such contradiction the Smṛiti should be acted upon.²
- (3) If two Texts differ reason must prevail in practice.³
- (4) Smṛiti is superior to mere rule of prudence.⁴
- (5) In absence of Śhruti and Smṛiti custom is authority.⁴
- (6) A principle of law established in one instance should be extended to other cases also provided there is no impediment.
- (7) Between rules general and special the special is to prevail.

All parts of the Dharma Śāstra have not been treated in these Digests nor are their conclusions the same. These differences have led to the formation of the different schools of law as the Benares, Mithākshara, Mithlala (north Behar) Bengal (Dayabhāga) Mahārāstra and Gujrāt schools.

(4) Manu Smṛiti

(a) Glowing tributes of Scholars to Manu Smṛiti

Manu Smṛiti by its memorable laws and rules as to the several institutions peculiar to India sums up the choicest wisdom of long centuries as would appear from the following observations made by the well known German philosopher Nietzsche 'Such a book as that of Manu sums up the experience, sagacity and experimental morals

1 (Vyasa S. 1-4). 2 (Y. S. 2-21) 3 (N. S. 1-39). 4 (M. S. 1-110)

of long centuries, it comes to a final decision. To draw up a law book like that of Manu means to permit the nation henceforth to get the upper hand, to become perfect and to be ambitious of the highest art of living." Similarly that highly talented and experienced civilian Sir George Birdwood pays a glowing tribute to Manu Smṛiti in the following terms "The caste system of the code of Manu is the charter of the very essence of India, the breaking of which would reduce India to a deadlier anarchy than that of a thousand years brought to an end by our great victory of Plassey". The well-known philosopher Swāmi Vivekānand also makes similar observations about Manu Smṛiti "We must revive the old laws of the Rishis. We must initiate the whole people into the codes of our old Manu and Yājñavalkya with a few modifications here and there to adjust them to the changed circumstances of the time. Remember always there is not in this world one other country whose institutions are better than the institutions of this land".

(b) Short Summary of Manu Smṛiti.

Of all Smṛitis Manu Smṛiti being the oldest and the most important I shall here reproduce a short summary of its contents as given by Prof A. B. Keith in his history of Ancient Sanskrit literature.

Book I—It contains an interesting semi-philosophical account of creation in the popular Paurāṇic type of a realistic Vedānta combined with Sāṅkhya terms, including the essential doctrine of the three constituents (gunas) of nature (Prakṛiti) which however is not independent but a creation, as also are the souls.

Book II—In it the sources of law are declared (viz Śhruti, Smṛiti, and good conduct including custom) and the duties of the student

Book III—The householder occupies attention, his marriage, daily rites and funeral offerings (Śiāddha)

Book IV—Deals with occupation and general rules of life.

Book V—Treats of lawful and forbidden food, impurity and purification, and rules as to women (and their duties).

Book VI—Deals with the two further stages of life, the hermit in the forest and the ascetic.

Book VII—We come to the duties of the king, including general political maxims.

Books I III & IV—We have civil and criminal law, including procedure and evidence, especially ordeals. The topics are given as eighteen, a precision without any parallel in the *Sutras*: recovery of debts, deposit and pledge sale without ownership, partnership concerns subtraction of gifts, non-payment of wages non-performance of agreement rescission of sale and purchase masters and herdsmen, disputes as to boundaries; defamation assault and hurt theft violence, adultery duties of husband and wife inheritance and partition, gambling and wagers.

Book IV—Adds an account of the duties of kings and of those of *Vaishyas* and *Sudras*.

Book V—This deals with the mixed castes the rules as to occupation affecting the castes and occupation in time of distress when normal rules must yield.

Book VI—We find rules for gifts, sacrifices and penances.

Book VII—Follows the sinner to his retribution in the next life by the rules of transmigration, and adds counsel regarding the means of attaining release. In this as in Chapter I we have the popular *Vedanta* with strong *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* influences.

(c) Important Doctrines in *Manu Smṛiti*.

(1) Sources of Authority

Manu Smṛiti declares *Vedas* as the principal source and authority of law and virtue¹. Those who do not believe in the authority of the *Vedas* are considered atheists who deserve to be outcasted by the wise men². *Śruti* (Revealed Texts) *Smṛiti* (Traditional Law) and good conduct are the sources of authority of virtue and law³. Immemorial custom is transcendental law, if it is based on *Śruti* or *Smṛiti*⁴.

(II) Theology

In *Manu Smṛiti* the Vedic deities are still objects of worship. It also presents the picture of a personal God in triple aspect of creation, preservation and destruction of the cosmos⁵. God is the supreme ruler and Governor of this universe who gives births to human beings and allots to them fruits in accordance with the acts

1. (2-6 13) 2. (2-11) 3. (2-6) 4. (1-108). 5. (1-5 6 7).

done by them in a former life as this is not the only creation but there are innumerable creations and dissolutions of the universe according to the Vedic conception which is followed in *Manu Smṛiti*.

(iii) Cosmology

The cosmology in *Manu Smṛiti* is also akin to that in the Vedas. It shows more a clear development of the idea of evolution rather than creation of a new universe which did not exist before as in the Vedas. There was at first only chaos or darkness in which this universe was wholly immersed.¹ The Lord then created the universe out of this chaos by his own free will and from his own self.²

The above idea of creation of the universe from chaos is again akin to that in the *Nasadiya* hymn of the *Rig Veda* which has been already discussed by me in the second chapter. Here chaos does not mean nothing but it means the unmanifest condition of the universe just before creation, containing the latent seeds of all, which cannot be seen by the eye. Creation therefore is really a process of evolution only or making manifest what was unmanifest, the idea of creating something out of nothing being repugnant to the Vedic theory of creation. The Lord first created waters out of darkness and placed his seed in them.³ The waters are called *Nāīā* and the Lord occupying the same is called *Nāīāyana* as the waters constitute his abode.⁴ The seed then became a golden egg in which he himself was first born as *Brahmā* (masculine). The egg burst into two halves of which the upper half became heaven, while the lower half became the earth. Having divided his own body, the mighty power became half male and half female, nature active and nature passive and from that female he produced *Vṛāj*.⁵ The *Vṛāj* performed austerities and produced *Manu*,⁶ who in his turn performed very difficult religious rites and duties and produced ten holy *Prajāpatis* or Lords of created beings, *Mānichi*, *Atri* and others.⁷ The evolution of the universe of names and forms then proceeded in a certain order as mentioned in *Manu Smṛiti* of which the first was intelligence or thought which gave rise to desire out of

1. (1-5) 2. (1-7, 8). 3. (1-8). 4. (1-10) 5. (1-32).
6. (1-33). 7. (1-35).

which were evolved the 5 elements subtle and gross and 5 organs of action and mind. These evolutes are similar to those mentioned in the Sankhya making up the total number of principles to twenty five with the addition of the Lord as the twenty sixth principle.

(iv) Philosophy

In the matter of philosophical doctrines, Manu Smṛiti follows the Upanishads and it accepts the doctrine of monism and the principle of organic unity of the whole cosmos as having its being in the one universal self (Ātman).¹ There is only one Supreme Being who is called by different names: Fire, Manu, the Lord of the creatures, Indra, Prana (life) and Eternal Brahman.² Emancipation or true freedom (*Svārājya*) consists in realising the oneness and unity of all as having their being within the Supreme Spirit.³ True happiness consists in perfect freedom, self-reliance and realisation of the unity of all as having their being within the self while misery consists in dependance on another as separate from and independent of one's self.⁴

(v) The Law of Karma and Transmigration of the Soul

Manu Smṛiti follows the Upanishads in its doctrines of Karma (actions) and transmigration of the souls according to which the souls have to take births in such bodies allotted to them by the Lord as correspond exactly to the actions done by them in the former life to enjoy rewards and suffer punishments allotted to them by the Lord as fruit of their actions done in the past life. Thus a man may be born in a low caste as Chandala, Pukkasa or even an animal as a dog, a pig, an ass, a vulture, a snake etc. as a punishment for leading a wicked life in the former birth.⁵ After suffering in the hell all the horrors there to atone for the misdeeds and sins committed by him in the former life.⁶ On the other hand he may be born in higher castes and in more favourable circumstances if he has led a moral life and done good and religious works in his past life.⁷ Manu sets out the theory of the soul's migrations and wanderings in this world through ten thousand millions of existences.⁸ Transmigration of the soul depends on the three qualities of the

1 (12-118).	2 (12-123).	3. (12-91)	4 (4-160)	5 (12-54 to 69)
6, (6-61 12-16).		7 (12-19).		8. (6-63).

self, satva (goodness), Rajas (activity) and tanas (darkness) with which the Lord always completely pervades all existences.¹ When one of these qualities predominates in particular then it makes the soul distinguished for that quality.² Those endowed with goodness become gods, those with activity become men, while those with darkness sink to conditions of low caste men, beasts or even plants.³ The above principle is thus stated in the Manu Smṛiti "But to whatever course of action the Lord at first appointed each (kind of beings) that alone it has spontaneously adopted in each succeeding creation."⁴ "Whatever he (i.e. the Lord) assigned to each first at the creation, viz. noxiousness or harmlessness, gentleness or ferocity, virtue or sin, truth or falsehood, that clung (afterwards) spontaneously to it."⁵

The theory of double requital

The whole doctrine of transmigration of the soul as stated in the Manu Smṛiti is based on the law of Karma (actions) in accordance with the principle of the maxim "As a man soweth so shall he reap," as would appear from the following verse⁶ "But with whatever disposition of mind a man performs any act, he reaps its result in a future body endowed with the same quality."

Manu Smṛiti accepts the theory of a double requital as stated in the Upanishads. According to this theory the embodied soul takes bodily shapes in this world after enjoying rewards in heaven for the good works done by him or suffering punishments in the hell for the misdeeds done in the past life by way of a second requital of the said deeds.⁷

(vi) Ethics (Dharma).

The peculiar merit of Manu Smṛiti lies in its special teachings as to the value of Dharma (righteousness) as a divine law laid down for the guidance of man as would appear from the following verses — "Alone man is born, alone he dies, alone he reaps the fruit of good and evil done by him. Laying down on the ground the body of the dead as if he were a clod of earth or a log of wood, the relations depart with face averted, righteousness alone follows the soul on death as a companion."⁸ "Righteousness being violated destroys, righteousness being preserved preserves. Therefore

1 (12-54). 2. (12-25). 3 (12-40 to 50). 4 (1-28). 5. (1-29).
6. (12-81). 7 (19-22) 8. (4-240, 241)

righteousness must not be violated lest violated righteousness destroy us "1 "The only friend that follows a man even after death is righteousness for everything else is lost at the same time when the body perishes "2 "Dharma or righteousness is defined as ten-fold which must be observed by the twice-born belonging to any of the four orders of castes viz. contentment, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purity, restraint of the senses, wisdom, knowledge of the Supreme Self, truthfulness and abstention from anger. This is ten-fold righteousness "3 This may be compared with the ten-fold division of Dharma (righteousness) in Yajñavalkya Smṛiti which comprehends the whole duty of man viz. 'Truth, honesty, mildness, modesty, purity, wisdom, firmness, self-control, restraint of the senses and learning. These make up the whole of righteousness "4 These are however only means to the ultimate end of self-realisation which is won only by spiritual knowledge according to Yajñavalkya "5 In the midst of the circle abides the self as if a motionless light. It must be known, and knowing it, no man is born again to life "6

Dharma or righteousness again is of two kinds viz. general Dharma or law for all the four castes and particular Dharma which is for particular castes, particular persons, or for a particular purpose. General Dharma or law consists of the following five moral virtues which are to be observed by all the four castes viz. Abstention from injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, purity and restraint of the senses "7

(vii) Duties of the four castes (Chāturvārṇa)

Particular Dharma consists of the specific sets of duty laid down for the castes separately. Thus the six acts prescribed for a *Brāhmin* (priestly caste) are teaching and studying the Vedas, sacrificing for himself and sacrificing for others, and making gifts and receiving them "8 Out of these six acts three viz.—Sacrificing for others, teaching the Vedas and accepting gifts from pure men are the means of subsistence for a *Brāhmin* while the remaining three are religious duties "9 The three acts, teaching, sacrificing for others and acceptance of gifts which are incumbent on the *Brāhmins* are forbidden to *Kṣatriyas* (warrior class) and *Vaiśyas*

1 (8-15). 2 (8-17). 3 (6-92). 4 (Y S, 3-00). 5 (Y S, 3-109).
6 (10-03). 7 (10-75). 8 (10-76).

(merchant class) but sacrifice for one's self, gift, and learning are the religious duties of both these latter castes.¹ Now as a means of subsistence, the profession of carrying arms and throwing them is prescribed for the *Kshatriyas* while trade, rearing cattle and agriculture are prescribed as professions for the *Vaishyas*² The *Sūdras* are taught to obtain their livelihood principally by service of the *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, and the *Vaishyas*³ But if they are unable to find service with the twice-born (*Dwijas*), they may maintain themselves by handicrafts and other mechanical occupations and practical arts as carving, sculpture, painting etc.⁴ Manu then describes the professions which a *Brahmin* and a *Kshatriya* may follow in distressed times. Thus the *Brahmin* if he is unable to obtain his livelihood from the peculiar professions allowed to him, he may follow the profession of a *Kshatriya* and if he is unable to obtain his livelihood from this, he may obtain livelihood from the professions allowed to *Vaishyas*⁵ But a *Brahmin* and a *Kshatriya* should as far as possible avoid agriculture, as it involves the killing of insects etc.⁶ Though the *Shūdras* are forbidden to follow the peculiar acts and professions prescribed for the three higher castes, they are praised if they follow without envy the rules of good conduct practised by the higher castes without using the vedic Mantras.⁷ Not only so, but by leading a high moral life, *Shūdras* can obtain even the higher world⁸ This will clearly show that the angle of vision of the author of *Manu Smṛiti* is non-sectarian and comprehensive enough to provide for the good and welfare of the *Shūdras* too who are given the higher world as a reward if they lead a moral life and the charge levelled by some reformers against *Manu Smṛiti* that it has neglected the *Shūdras* altogether is quite unfounded and false. However the allotment of the various occupations to the various castes which are created by God according to the deeds done by them in a former life, is based on the principle of the division of functions. The author of *Manu Smṛiti* following the principles of the *Bhagwad Gītā* is averse to the mixture of the four castes (*Varnasankhara*) and the inter change of the peculiar duties allotted to them according to their births. Thus it is laid down that " it is far better to

1. (10-77, 80). 2. (10-78). 3. (10-120 to 123). 4. (10-99, 100).
 5. (10-81, 82). 6. (10-83). 7. (10-127). 8. (10-128).

discharge one's own (appointed) duty though it may be imperfect than to perform that of another caste although it may be perfect, for he who lives according to the law of another caste is instantly excluded from his own caste.¹

(viii) Obligatory duties of the twice-born to perform the daily Prayers (Sandhyā) and the five great sacrifices (Pancha Mahāyajnas)

The daily prayers (Sandhyā)

It was a part of the daily obligatory duties of every Āryana belonging to the three higher castes Brahmins Kshatriyas and Vaishyas called twice born (Dvijas) on account of their second birth by initiation in the Sacrament of Sacred thread (Upanayana) to offer the morning twilight and evening twilight prayers to God by doing the Sandhyā, chanting the Gayatri Mantra in the Rig Veda,² which destroyed the sins contracted during the previous night and during the day³ and to perform the five great Sacrifices (Pancha Mahāyajna) while he is able to perform them.⁴ A Brahmin who recites regularly during both twilights the Gayatri verse gains the whole merit which the recitation of the Vedas confers.⁴ Any omission to perform the daily Sandhyā was considered sinful and involved an exclusion from all the duties and rights of an Āryan just like a Sudra.⁵

The five great sacrifices (Pancha Mahāyajnas).

As regards omission on the part of a person to perform the five great sacrifices it is said he lives not though he breathes.⁶ The five great sacrifices (Pancha Mahāyajnas) were therefore prescribed to expiate the sins of offences committed knowingly or unknowingly by having recourse to five slaughter houses as it were viz., the hearth the grinding stone, the broom, the pestle and the water vessel.⁷ The five great sacrifices consisted of (1) the sacrifice to Brahman (*Brahma Yajna*) in the form of teaching and studying the Vedas revealed to the sages (Rishis) (2) the sacrifice to the manes (*Pitra Yajna*) in the form of offerings of water and food called *Tarpana* (3) The sacrifice offered to the Gods, (*Deva*

1 (2-101) 2 (2-102) 3 (3-60) 4 (2-78) 5 (2-80 103) 6 (2-72)
7 (3-68 60 71)

'*Yajna*) in the form of burnt oblations offered in the fire (4) offering made to the *Bhūta* i.e. living creatures (*Bhūta Yajna*) in the form of Bali (gift of food) (5) offering to men (*Nara Yajna*) in the form of hospitable reception of guests¹ The sages, the manes, the gods, the *Bhūtas*, and the guests ask the householders for offerings and gifts; hence he who knows the law must give to them what is due to each² Let him worship according to the rule, the sages by the private recitation of the *Veda*, the gods by burnt oblations, the manes by funeral offerings (*Shrāddha*), men by gifts of food and *Bhūtas* (living creatures) by the Bali offerings.³

Obsequial offerings to the manes of the deceased ancestors (*Shrāddhas*) (*Pitri Yajna*)

Manu has made elaborate rules about the performance of *Shrāddha* ceremonies (i.e. obsequial ceremonies) which consist in making offerings of balls of rice (*Pinda*) to the manes of the deceased male ancestors upto three degrees in ascent⁴ and which required purity of food, as also purity on the part of the person performing *Shrāddha* as well as the *Brahmins* invited to dinner at the *Shrāddha*. The right to inheritance as heir to the property of a deceased person depends upon the capacity of offering *Pindas*, the spiritual efficacy of which determined the order of succession of *Sapindas* or agnates of the deceased. Manu further observes "The rite in honour of the manes is more important than the rite in honour of the gods."⁵ He who honours the manes of his deceased ancestors by *Shrāddhas* obtains distinguished offspring by way of reward.⁶

The fire sacrifice to the Gods (*Deva Yajna*).

Of these 5 sacrifices the sacrifice by offering burnt oblations into the fire was the most important as such oblations reach the Sun; from the Sun comes rain, from rain food and living creatures derive their subsistence from food.⁷ The same idea is repeated in the *Bhagwad Gītā*⁸ Thus the very subsistence of the world with all the animate and inanimate objects therein depends on the regular performance of fire sacrifices offered to the gods who supply food, riches and wealth to this earth by way of reward.

1. (3-7) 2. (3-30) 3. (3-51) 4. (9-186). 5. (3-203). 6. (3-277).
7. (3-76) 8. B. G. 3-14)

Universality of love in the daily rites of making offerings to living creatures (Bhūta Yajna) and to men (Nara Yajna).

The idea of making offerings to living creatures (Bhūta Yajna) was a very lofty and noble one and it clearly speaks of the high sense of tenderness and affection in the mind of the venerable Rishi towards all living creatures, including even the rude and dumb animals, insects, birds and so on. It is said in Manu Smṛiti "let him gently place on the ground some food for dogs, outcasts Chandalas, (i.e. untouchables) those afflicted with diseases that are punishments of former sins crows and insects"¹ That Brahmann who thus daily honours all beings goes endowed with a resplendent body by a straight road to the highest dwelling place (i.e. Brahman)² Having performed this Bhūta offering he shall first feed his guest and according to the rule give alms to an ascetic and to a student³ A twice born householder by giving alms receives the same reward for his meritorious act as one derives by presenting a cow to his teacher⁴

(ix) Hospitality to the guest and social service

Manu Smṛiti lays great stress on the duty of hospitality on the part of the householder to his guest. It is said in Manu Smṛiti "But let him offer in accordance with the rule to a guest a seat and water as well as food garnished with seasoning according to his ability"⁵ "Grass, room (for resting) water and fourthly a kind word, these things never fail in the houses of good men"⁶ "Let him not eat any dainty food which he does not offer to his guest, the hospitable reception of guests procures wealth, fame long life and heavenly bliss."⁷ "Let him offer to his guests seats rooms, beds attendance on departure and honour (while they stay) to the most distinguished in the best form, to the lower ones in a lower form and to equals in an equal manner"⁸

Having honoured the gods, the sages, men, the manes, and the guardian deities of the house the householder shall eat afterwards what remains"⁹ He who prepares food for himself alone eats nothing but sin for it is ordained that the food which remains after the performance of the sacrifices shall be the meal of Virtuous men¹⁰ The reader will now easily understand from the above how

1 (3-92). 2 (3-93). 3 (3-94). 4 (3-95). 5 (3-100). 6 (3-101).
7 (3-106). 8 (3-107). 9 (3-117). 10 (3-118 of B G 3-13)

lofty and noble is the Hindu ideal of life as laid down in Manu Smṛiti. The duty of hospitality on the part of a house holder enjoined him to do acts of service and usefulness to his fellow brothers in one shape or another viz, hospitality to guests, alms to the poor and the needy and other acts of benevolence and usefulness to society

(x) Prohibition of inter-caste marriages.

There is also an interdiction of marriage outside one's own caste. If a male marries a female belonging to the lower class the marriage is called *Anuloma* and the offspring is less pure than the father² But marriage of a female belonging to a higher caste with a male belonging to the lower caste is the most condemned of all mixed marriages and is called a *Pratiloma* marriage. Thus the offspring of a Brahmin woman by marriage with a person belonging to the Shūdra class is called a *Chandāla* who is outside the pale of castes being deemed most degraded and sinful³ These caste hybrids or offsprings of Varnasankara marriages especially Pratiloma marriages belong to no caste (Vainapetam) and are Anāryans. They are the most sinful of all creatures⁴ They destroy the whole kingdom very shortly together with all the inhabitants thereof.⁵ These persons are *Unāryans* and they belong to no caste (*Avarna* or *Panchama*). They are distinguished from Āryans by harshness, cruelty and bad conduct⁶

Their residence also is at the end of the village,⁷ and they are not worthy of association on account of their unclean habits and sinful and impure conduct⁸

(xi) Preference of a moral life to that by birth.

However in Manu Smṛiti although a man's caste is determined by birth,⁹ yet a Brāhmin is censured and treated like a Shūdra if he neglects the duties of his own caste and leads a degraded life while a Shūdra is respected and praised like a Brāhmin, if he leads a high moral life¹⁰ This will at once satisfy the reader that Manu has shown no partiality towards Brāhmins nor any aversion or hatred towards Shūdhas as wrongly charged by certain hostile critics

1. (10-97)	2. (10-6, 14)	3. (10-16, 35, 36, 39)	4. (10-57)
5. (10-61).	6 (10-58).	7. (10-51)	8 (10 53)
10. (10-65).			9 (10-74).

(xii) The high status of womanhood

Now as regards the status of women too, Mann speaks of them with great reverence and respect. It is stated "Where women are respected the Gods rejoice"¹ They deserve to be respected and they are compared with Goddess Laxmi (the consort of God Vishnu)² "The production of religious rites as also heavenly bliss for the ancestors and one's self depend on one's wife alone"³ By the sacred tradition the woman is declared to be the soil (Kshetra) while the man is declared to be the seed (Beeja). The production of all corporeal beings takes place through the union of the soil with the seed⁴. Thus without the warm co-operation and active help of women the order of the world could not go on.

(xiii) Sacramental character and Indissolubility of Hindu marriage

The highest ideal of the unity of interest of husband and wife is set out in Mann Smriti being based on the sacramental character of Hindu marriage which is indissoluble by its very nature. A wife is called the half body of the husband (Ardhāṅgana)⁵. Upon this principle depends the right of widows to adopt a son to their deceased husbands. It is stated in Manu Smriti "He is a perfect man who consists of (three persons united) his wife himself and his offspring. Thus says the Veda and the learned Brahmins propound this maxim likewise 'The husband is declared to be one with the wife' "⁶ Therefore "a wife cannot by repudiation (or divorce) be released from her husband. Such we know the law to be which the Lord of creatures made of old"⁷. The sacred tie of marriage in the Brahma form is indissoluble and such marriage cannot therefore be dissolved according to the sacramental theory of marriage.

(xiv) Ideal unity of Husband and Wife.

As a wife is merged ideally in the entity of her husband she is not independent of him⁸. Therefore a wife cannot do separate sacrifice from the husband⁹. This principle of wife's non-independence from her husband follows directly from the sacramental character of Hindu marriage and her ideal unity with her husband.

1. (8-56).	2. (9-26)	3. (9-28).	4. (9-33).	5. (B. S. 25-11).
6. (8-45)	7. (9-46)	8. (5-147, 9-3).	9. (5-155).	

**(xv) Freedom of a woman in conformity
with law (Dharma).**

By co-operation with her partner for life and with his consent a Hindu wife is quite free to choose any course of action that she likes and there is no restriction whatever to her freedom provided it is not opposed to Dharma or law as laid down by wise sages like Manu. Loving co-operation and not competition between a husband and a wife is the cardinal doctrine of Manu Smṛiti which regulates all their true relations in life and which is calculated to bring about social harmony, unity and peace in the country. Identity of interest of husband and wife for a common purpose viz, realisation of the unity of the supreme self and not equality of status or rights is the Hindu ideal of life as contrasted with the ideal in the west.

(xvi) Brāhmin as the type of virtue and self sacrifice.

It may be observed here that Manu has typified out of the four castes Brāhmin as the highest being an embodiment of purity, virtue and learning¹ not with a view to create in him a sense of superiority over the other castes or endow him with greater rights than those possessed by the latter but to show the high sense of duty and responsibility cast upon him which entails a life of high discipline and self sacrifice on his part which it was too difficult for persons of the lower castes and the Sūdras in particular to observe.

**(5) Incidents of Hindu marriage and marriage
rites and ceremonies.**

(1) Marriage a Religious Sacrament and obligation.

According to the Vedic theory, marriage is not a contract but a religious Sacrament and obligation which was enjoined on all whether males or females for purification, extreme asceticism being repugnant to the Hindu scriptures except in the case of a few highly qualified and enlightened persons. It is stated in the Vajasaneyī Brāhmaṇa that man is only half and until he marries a woman, he is unable to procreate progeny. Hence he is incomplete until he marries and begets children when he becomes perfect. Manu² also lays down that a man is incomplete without a wife and he must therefore marry

1. (1-93, 10-3). 2. (9-45).

to attain perfection by performing religious rites and duties with the help and co-operation of his wife (*sahadharmanī*) who was given a very high position and status in the household as a co-owner with her husband being his half body (*Ardhāṅgā*) equally sharing the result of his good or wicked deeds.¹ Manu enjoins that a twice born person having completed the life of a student being the first order of life (*Brahmacharya Āśrama*) and the course of studies laid down for him and having bathed, with the permission of his teacher and performed the rite of *Samāvartana* according to the rule he shall marry a wife of equal caste who is endowed with auspicious qualities.² Thus Marriage is laid down by Manu as a holy duty for ones purification and a necessity for regulating the natural impulses of a man,³ and secondly to beget a son,⁴ to discharge the debt that he owes to his parents and deceased ancestors by the sons performing *Shraddha* (obsequial ceremonies) and offering funeral cakes to him after his death as also his ancestors, thus saving them from hell.⁵ Similarly for women too for their purification and perfection the nuptial ceremony is enjoined as a Vedic Sacrament which corresponds to the initiation ceremony (*Upanayana*) in the case of boys.⁶ According to Manu the person who seeks final liberation without having discharged his 3 debts viz, to the gods, Rishis of the Vedas and his deceased ancestors by begetting a son sinks downwards.⁷

(ii) Betrothal and marriage

The choice of the bride (*Varana*) precedes the ceremony of joining the hands of the bride and the bridegroom (*Panigrahana*) which forms part of the regular marriage.⁸ The choice of bride on the part of the bridegroom is the proposal for marriage which is followed by acceptance on the part of the father of the bride who promises to give his daughter in marriage (*Vāgdāna*) to the bridegroom. These two together constitute betrothal for marriage which differs in several important respects from the regular marriage. Manu prohibits even the breach of an agreement for marriage. Thus he says: "Let no prudent man after giving his daughter to one give her again to another for he who gives his daughter whom he had before given incurs

1. (BS. 24-11). 2. (3-2 4 4-1) 3. (5-56). 4. (9-26 33 96) 5. (9-138).
6. (2-57). 7. (6-35) 8. (N 8 12-2).

the guilt of speaking falsely regarding a human being.”¹ Yājñavalkya however has relaxed the rigour of the above rule by making an exception allowing rescission of betrothal in certain circumstances. Thus he says. “If a person gives to another a maiden who had been once given away either by words or mind he meets with the punishment of a thief. But if a bridegroom better than the promised one is available she may be given away to the former even if promised to the latter.”² Similarly Nārada says “Of these parts of the marriage ceremony the choice of the bride is declared to lose its binding force when a blemish is subsequently discovered in either of the two parties. The *Mantia* (Piaye) which is recited during the ceremony of joining the bride and the bridegroom’s hands is the permanent token of matrimony”³ which is indissoluble. But in the case of a betrothal, if the bridegroom goes abroad after betrothal, let the maiden wait till her menses have passed three times and then choose another husband.⁴

(iii) Competency of parties to marriage.

(a) Suitable qualifications of a bridegroom.

Nārada has enjoined that the man proposing to marry must undergo an examination with regard to his virility and potency. When the fact of his virility has been placed beyond doubt he shall obtain the maiden but not otherwise. He lays down several rules, for examination of a person’s potency.⁵ Yājñavalkya also similarly says “A bridegroom should be endued with all the qualifications, be of the same caste and social standing, well read in the Vedas, carefully examined about his manly power, youthful, intelligent and agreeable to all the people”.⁶ Manus says “A student who has studied in due order the 3 Vedas or two or even one only without breaking the rules of studentship, (Brahmacharya) shall enter the order of householders, and marry a wife of equal caste (Savarnā) who is endowed with auspicious bodily marks, having bathed with the permission of his teacher and performed the Samāvartana ceremony (the rite on returning home after completion of student’s life).”⁷

1. (9-71). 2 (Y. S. 1-65). 3 (N. S. 12-3). 4. (N. S. 12-24).
5. (N. S. 12-8 to 19). 6. (Y. S. 1-55). 7. (3-2, 4).

(b) Whether eunuchs and madmen are competent to marry ?

Although according to Narada a eunuch is incompetent to marry, Manu is not clear on the point. Thus he says "If the eunuch and the rest desire to take wives, the offspring of such among them as have children is worthy of a share"² Different interpretations of the above verse are given by different commentators as shown by Dr Bühler in his notes on the translation of the verse in Manu Smṛiti.³ He remarks 'Thus Kulluka Bhattacharya says that by the employment of the term "somehow or other" it is indicated that a eunuch and the rest are not worthy to marry. In the sequel he explains the word offspring by Kshetrāja Rāghavānanda and Nandana follow him with respect to the latter point. Medhātithi is however of opinion that some of the persons disqualified from inheriting viz eunuchs and those born blind and deaf etc. may marry, while outcasts, madmen and the rest cannot do so. Hence the conditional clause may be taken in the sense as in the above translation (of Dr Bühler). He however adds that the rule may also refer to cases in which the cause of the disqualification arose after marriage. Nārāyaṇa's explanation is substantially the same. But he considers that a eunuch and an outcast cannot contract a legal marriage and that the expression 'Klibādayaha' literally 'those among whom the eunuch is the first' refers to men born blind and the rest. He admits also the rights of Kshetrāja sons of eunuchs and outcasts who contracted a marriage before their disqualification arose." It seems from the above that a marriage of a eunuch or even of an idiot if once completed would not be invalid as a Hindu marriage is not merely for sexual purposes.⁴

(c) Suitable qualifications of a bride for marriage

A damsel who is neither a sapinda (*Asapinda*) on the mother's side (related within 5 degrees) nor belongs to the same gotra or family (*Asagotra*) on the father's side (related within 7 degrees) is recommended to twice-born men for wedlock and conjugal union.⁴ This restriction of marriage with a wife outside one's family corresponds with the rule of *exogamy* which is based on a rule of science and sociology. Let him wed a female free from bodily defects and who

1 (9-203) 2. (S. B. E. Vol 25 P 373) 3. (See 14 Mad 316 320), 4 (3-5)

has an agreeable name.¹ She should be endued with auspicious marks. She must not have been known by any one or betrothed to any one before (*Ananyapūrvikām*) and she must be beautiful and younger than the bridegroom.² A prudent man should not marry a maiden who has no brother nor one whose father is not known.³ For the first marriage of twice-born men wives of equal caste (*Savarnā*) are recommended.⁴ A maiden should be taken from a respectable family.⁵

(d) Marriage with girls outside one's caste

(*Anuloma and Pratiloma*)

According to the *Mitākshara*, marriages are of 3 kinds viz, for religious purposes, for begetting a son and for desire.⁶ Having prescribed the rules for marriage for religious purposes, Manu next enacts rules for marriage through desire. For such persons the following females are approved according to the direct order of castes.⁷ "A sūdra wife alone can be the wife of a sūdra, she and one of his own caste the wives of a Vaishya, those two and one of his own caste the wives of a Kshatriya and those three and one of his own caste the wives of a Brāhmin".⁸ A Sūdra woman is not mentioned in any ancient narration as the first wife of a Brāhmin or of a Kshatriya though they lived in the greatest distress.⁹ Twice born men who in their folly wed wives of the Sūdra caste soon degrade their families and their children to the state of Sūdra.¹⁰ Yājñavalkya and Vishnu however differ from Manu as regards the competency of persons of the three higher castes to marry with a girl of the Sūdra caste and they prohibit their marriage with such a girl.¹¹ Thus Yājñavalkya says: "There is the saying (as in Manu) that the twice born persons can get wives from among the Sūdras. I do not approve of it for the Ātman or soul itself is born there in the wife as the son". It has been held by the Bombay High Court that a marriage between a male of a higher caste and a female of a lower caste which is called *Anuloma marriage* is valid e.g. in the case of a male of the Vaishya caste and a female of the Sūdra caste.¹² Similarly the same High Court has held the marriage between a Brāhmin male and

1 (3-10) 2 (Y. S. 1-52). 3 (3-11) 4 (3-12). 5 (Y. S. 1-54).
 6. (Y. S. 1-56) 7 (3-12) 8 (3-13) 9 (3-14, G. D. S. 15-18, A. D. S. 1-5-18-33). 10. (3-15) 11. (Y. S. 1-56, V. S. 25-6). 12. (46 Bom. 871).

the Sudra female of Dharmā caste valid and the child of such marriage as legitimate.¹ But the marriage of a female of higher caste with a male of lower caste which is called *Pratiloma marriage* is illegal and the issue of such marriage would be also illegitimate.

(iv) Eight forms of Marriage

Eight forms of marriage are described in Manu and in less detail in Nārada and Yājñavalkya.² "The ceremony of Brahmin, of the Kshatriya, of the Rishi, of the Pṛjyāptra, of the Asura, of the Gandharva, and of the Rakshasa the eighth and basest is that of the Paishacha. (1) The gift of a daughter clothed only with a single robe to a man learned in the Vedas whom her father voluntarily invites, and respectfully receives is the nuptial rite called *Brahma*. (2) The rite which sages call *Datta* is the gift of a daughter whom her father has decked in gay attire when the sacrifice is already begun to the officiating priest who performs that act of religion. (3) When the father gives his daughter away having received from the bridegroom one pair of line or two pairs, for uses prescribed by law, that marriage is termed *Arsha*. (4) The nuptial rite called *Iṣṭyapaṭi* is when the father gives away his daughter with due honour saying distinctly May both of you perform together your civil and religious duties. (5) When the bridegroom having given as much wealth as he can afford, himself takes her voluntarily as his bride, that marriage is named *Āsura*. (6) The reciprocal connection of a youth and a damsel with mutual desire is the marriage denominated *Gandharva* contracted for the purpose of amorous embraces from sensual inclination. (7) The seizure of a maiden by force from her house while she weeps and calls for assistance, after her kinsmen and friends have been slain in battle or wounded and their houses broken open is the marriage styled *Rakshasa*. (8) When the lover secretly embraces the damsel, either sleeping or flushed with strong liquor or disordered in her intellect, that sinful marriage called *Paishacha* is the eighth and the basest." Of these 8 forms of marriage the first four were approved while the last four were disapproved forms.³

These forms belong to different stages of society. The first four point to a time when the rights of parents over

1 (32 Bom L R. 1348). 2 (3-20 to 42 N S. 1^o-39 to 45 Y S. 1-8 to 61 V S. 1-28 to 36) 3. (3-30 to 4^o)

their daughters were unknown or disregarded and when men procured for themselves women by force, fraud or enticement. The Rākshasa and the Gāndharva forms were considered lawful for the warrior tribe¹ The Āsura form of marriage by purchase which was condemned by Manu,² was the next in order of antiquity to those mentioned before. As regards Āsura form of marriage, Mr. Mayne observes "As delicacy increased in the relation between the sexes, marriage by sale would fall into disrepute from its resemblance to prostitution" Hence Manu says. "Let no father who knows the law receive a gratuity however small for giving his daughter in marriage, since the man who through avarice takes a gratuity for that purpose is a seller of his offspring³ The Ārsha form which is one of the approved forms of marriage, according to Mr Mayne is simply a revival from Āsura, the substantial price paid for the girl having dwindled down to a gift of a slight or nominal value⁴ Another mode of preserving the symbol of sale was receipt of a gift as a chariot and a hundred cows which was immediately returned to the giver just like the nuzzrana given to some of the Indian princes by their subjects The arrangement is said by Āpastambha to have been prescribed by the Vedas in order to fulfil the law⁵ The ultimate compromise as Mr Mayne puts it appears to have been that the present given by the suitor was received by the parents for the benefit of the bride and became her dowry which is called Pallu in Gujarati. Manu says: "When money or goods are given to damsels whose kinsmen receive them not for their own use, it is no sale, it is merely a token of courtesy and affection to the bride.⁶ This gift which was called the bride's fee (Shulka), passed in a peculiar course of devolution to the woman's own brothers, instead of to her own female heirs The shulka was considered something over which the woman's family had special rights If they abandoned the possession they retained the reversion Mayne ascribes this as the reason why when a girl who had been allowed to pass maturity exercised her right of choosing for herself, the bridegroom was not to give a nuptial gift to her father, since he had lost his dominion over her by detaining her at a time

1 (3-26). 2 (3-25, 41) 3 (4-51, 9-98, 100) 4 (3-29, Y. S 1-59).
 5. (A. D S 2-6-13-12) 6. (3-54, see in the goods of Nathibai, 2 Bom. 9)

when she might have been a parent"¹ But on the other hand as the reversion was thus lost she was not allowed to carry with her the ornaments she had received from her own father's family² If the girl died before marriage, the gifts made by the bridegroom reverted to him after deducting any expenses that might have been already incurred³ The essential difference between the above forms of marriage and the remaining three viz., the *Brahma*, the *Dāsa* and *Prayagatya*, is that while on the one hand the girl is voluntarily handed over by her parents they on the other hand receive no equivalent for the gift. The *Dāsa* form is appropriate to an officiating priest i.e. a Brahmin as also the *Brahma* form in which also the bridegroom to whom the girl was given in marriage was a man learned in the Vedas and therefore presumably a Brahmin Of the above forms of marriage, all but 2 viz., the *Brahmin* and the *Āsura* are now obsolete It may be stated generally that the *Brahmin* is the only legal form of marriage at present which will be presumed by law unless proved to the contrary by those asserting that the marriage was in a disapproved form As regards *Gandharva* form of marriage which was in vogue in the *Kalinyas* at a time when the notion of marriage involved no idea of permanence or exclusiveness it implied nothing more than fornication without the element of a permanent union

(v) Different sorts of sons

The early writers on law recognized various sorts of sons on account of the great necessity for sons in those times when a man was surrounded by enemies and the very existence and security of of a family depended upon the continual multiplication of its males The following sons were therefore recognized in the early times viz., (1) The legitimate son (*aurasa*) (2) the son of an appointed daughter (*putrikā putra*) who was considered to be the son of his mother's father by a fiction (3) the son begotten on the wife by another (*Kshetrāja*) by a religious appointment or Commission known as (*Niyoga*) (4) the son born secretly (*Gūdhaja*) (5) the maiden's son (*Kāṇina*) begotten in her maiden state (6) the son taken with the bride (*Sahodha*) along with her to her newly

1 (9-98) 2 (9-90 92). 3 (Y S 2 146).

wedded husband (7) the son of a remarried woman (*Paunarbhava*) by her second husband (8) the son by a Sūdra woman (*Nishāda*) or (9) by a concubine (*Parāsava*) (10) the adopted son (*Dattaka*) (11) the son made (*Kṛtrima*) artificially (12) the son bought (*Kṛita*) for a price (13) the son cast off (*Apavidha*) and (14) the son self-given (*Svayamdatta*)¹ Manu recognises only 12 kinds of sons in which son of an appointed daughter is not included as he is described by him separately to be equal to an actual son². Of the 12 kinds of sons recognised by Manu six are heirs and kinsmen viz., (1) the legitimate son (*Aurasa*) (2) the son begotten on a wife (*Kshetrāja*) (3) the son adopted (*Dattaka*) (4) the son made (*Kṛtrima*) (5) the son secretly born (*Gūdhotpanna*) and (6) the son cast off (*Apavidha*).³ The remaining six are not heirs but kinsmen viz., (1) the son of an unmarried maiden (*Kāmma*) (2) The son received with the wife (*Sahodha*) (3) the son bought (*Kṛita*) (4) the son begotten on a remarried woman (*Paunarbhava*) (5) the son self given (*Svayamdatta*) and (6) the son of sūdra female (*Shaudra*).⁴ Mr. Mayne suggests that "Where a son was so indispensable, we might expect that every contrivance would be exhausted to procure one" The sage Āpastambha however stands alone among the earlier writers in refusing to recognise any of the above classes of sons except the legitimate son.⁵ Āpastambha was also against mixed marriages.⁶

(vi) Rites and ceremonies of Brahma Marriage.

The marriage rite in the Brahma form which followed the betrothal consisted of the following parts viz., (1) The *Kanyā-Dāna* or the gift of a daughter in marriage with a vow (*sankalpa*) on the part of her father to the bridegroom wooing for her hand by pouring in his right hand water and handing over to him the bride by placing her in his right hand, invoking the blessings of *Prajāpati* or the Lord of Offspring.⁷ From the ceremony of gift of a girl in marriage (*Kanyā-Dāna*) on the part of her father some persons have

1 (9-127 to 140; 158 to 164, Y. S. 2-120 to 132, G. D. S. 28-32, 33; V. D. S. 17-9 to 22 N. S. 13-17 to 20, 45 to 47 B. D. S. 17-2-10 to 24). 2 (9-134 to 136. 3 (9-159). 4 (9-160) 5 (A. D. S. 2-6-13-1 to 11). 6 (A. D. S. 2-6-13-4, 5). 7. (P. G. S. 1-4-15).

come to the conclusion that according to the Hindu theory, the girl was treated as a chattel but this view is incorrect as will appear from the several Vedic Mantras uttered at the time of marriage which clearly show that the father gave her in marriage to a bridegroom after consulting her and secondly from the fact that the said ceremony was intended to show only that the father thenceforth gave up his right of protection which was transferred over by him to the bridegroom as indicated by the latter's taking hold of the bride's hand (*Pani-grahana*) (2) This is followed by the ceremony of joining the hands of the bride and the bridegroom (*Pāni Grahana*) accompanied with Vedic Mantras as a token of matrimony¹ (3) This is followed by the nuptial-fire sacrifice (*Vedic home*) at which oblations are offered into the Nuptial fire accompanied with mantras. The bridegroom makes the girl sit down behind the fire and while she takes hold of him, he makes three oblations into the holy fire to Gods Agni, Vāyu, and Surya (Sun)². The bride's father or brother then sacrifices,³ standing facing the West, while the bride is sitting facing the East. He holds the *Sruva* (the ladle containing clarified butter to be offered in the fire) on the head of the bride and makes an offering of the clarified butter into the fire repeating the following formula "Be queen and bear full sway over thy father-in-law, and rule supreme over thy husband's brothers and sister"⁴. The bridegroom then⁵ standing, his face being turned to the West, seizes with his right hand the right hand of the bride with the thumb, while she is sitting with her face to the East, with the words "I seize thy hand that I may gain good fortune, that thou may'st reach old age with me thy husband. The Gods Bhaga Aryaman, Savitri, and Parandhi have given thee to me to share my household for the sake of happiness"⁶. He then repeats five verses from the marriage hymn of the *Rigveda*⁷ and continues thus thus am I, that art thou, the heaven I, the earth thou the Rik art thou, the Sāman I, so be thou devoted to me Well let us here marry Let us beget offspring; let us acquire many sons who may reach old age"⁸. This Mantra

1 (M. S. 8-227 N. S. 12-3). 2. (Sh. G. S. 1-12-11). 3. (Sh. G. S. 1-13-1)

4 (R. V. 10-85-46). 5 (Sh. G. S. 1-13-2). 6 (R. V. 10-85-30)

7 (R. V. 10-85 37 to 41). 8. (Sh. G. S. 1-13 4).

shows that according to the Vedic theory of marriage, the relation of husband and wife was one of non-division and unity like that of the words 'sā' and 'am' in Sāma and of heaven and earth and Rik and Sāman which was indissoluble. The marriage tie was therefore by nature indissoluble. Now here four Brāhmanas repeat to the bride the Suryā hymn or the marriage hymn in the Rig veda¹ containing benedictions and blessings celebrating the marriage of Suryā the daughter of God Suiya (Sun) with Soma. (4) This is followed by the ceremony known as circumambulation or leading the bride round the nuptial fire (*Agni-parinayana*) which consists of the following rites viz the treading of the bride on the stone (*Ashmā-rohana*) placed towards the North by the priest, leading her round the fire, and the sacrifice of fried grains (*Lājā-homa*) The bridegroom makes the bride rise with the words 'come thou joyful one' and with his left hand makes her tread the tip of her right foot on the stone (*Ashmā-rohana*) with the words 'come, tread on the stone; like a stone be firm; tread the foes down, overcome the enemies.' The stone on which she stepped was to give her firmness He then leads her round the fire four times so that their right sides are turned to it. The bride's father or brother then pours out of a basket fried grains of rice mixed with Sāmī-leaves into her joined hands The spreading under, the sprinkling over and the second sprinkling over are done with Ājya-ghee (purified clarified butter) She then standing, sacrifices in the fire those fried grains (*Lājā-homa*) placed in her joined hands, while the husband who assists her in this, utters the words 'this woman strewing grains, prays thus 'May I bring bliss to my relations, may my husband live long; Svāhā'. All the ceremonies beginning from the treading upon the stone upto the throwing of the fried grains into the nuptial fire are repeated in the same way with the same mantias for a second time and a third time and silently (i.e. without Mantias) a fourth time². (5) This is followed by the last ceremony known as the *Sapta-padi* or the stepping forward of seven steps before the Nuptial fire on the part of the bride and the bridegroom in the North-eastern direction. This ceremony consists in the bridegroom who walks with the bride

1 (R. V. 10-85).

2 (Sh. G. S. 1-13-11 to 17; 1-14-1 to 4).

in the North-eastern direction holding her hand, making her step forward seven steps (*Sapta-padi*) one after the other over seven heaps of the fried grains of husked rice put in a line in the north-eastern direction, first with her right foot and then with her left foot repeating the following words for sap one step, for juice with two steps, for the prospering of wealth with three steps, for comfort with four steps, for cattle with five steps for the seasons with six steps friend be thou (i.e. be united to me) with seven steps. The bride and the bridegroom keep standing facing the east while performing the above rite. The priest then appears these foot-steps with water and sprinkles the heads of both the bride-groom and the bride with water out of a special water-pot kept in the north-east for the purpose, accompanied with Vedic Mootras. The couple then sits down behind the fire like before¹. The solemn vows and pledges made by the bridegroom to the bride at the *Sapta-padi* ceremony before the nuptial fire indicate clearly that the relation between husband and wife was not like that between a superior and a subordinate, but like that of friends and comrades. The wife was not by virtue of her marriage subordinated to her husband according to the Vedic theory but she was elevated to the status of a queen and mistress of the house (*Griha-patni*) to act in co-ordination with her husband for all religious and secular purposes. The *saptapadi* is the most important part of the marriage ceremony as the marriage becomes complete only when the seventh step is taken before the holy fire. Thus Monu says "The nuptial texts are a certain proof that a maiden has been made a lawful wife but the learned should know that the ceremony of marriage is complete only with the seven steps of the bride before the sacred fire". Medhātithi and Kulluka in their commentaries on the above verse say that after the seventh step, the marriage cannot be rescinded. Consummation is not necessary to make marriage complete and binding. On the completion of the seventh step before the nuptial fire on the part of the bride and the bridegroom, the marriage ceremony is complete and the marriage is indissoluble. Mann and Nārada say "Once is a partition made, once is a maiden given in marriage and once does a man say 'I will give' each of these acts is done once

only among the virtuous.”¹ This formula clearly shows that the marriage tie is indissoluble. As regards the significance of the rite of saptapadi, Dr. MacDonell observes “The seven steps which the bride took with her husband and the sacrificial food which she shared with him were to inaugurate friendship and community.”² The bridegroom then touches the bride’s heart with the words : “Into my will, I take thy heart, thy mind shall follow my mind; into my word thou shalt rejoice with all thy heart; may Prajāpati join thee to me.”³ On the conclusion of the Vedic festivities, the bride anointed and in festal array mounts with her husband a car adorned with red flowers and drawn by two white bulls. On this she is conducted in a procession to her new home.⁴ They sit silent when the sun has set until the Pole Star (Dhruva) appears. The husband shows his wife the Polar star (the star of Arundhati and the Seven rishis or the seven stars in the constellation of the Great Bear) with the words ‘firm be thou, thriving with me.’ Then she says ‘I see the Pole star, may I obtain offspring.’ Through a period of three nights let them refrain from conjugal intercourse. Let them sleep on the ground.⁵ On the fourth day after the wedding in the morning, the husband establishes the fire within the house and makes offerings into the holy fire of the mess of cooked food (*Sthālī Pāka*) with several formulæ addressed to different gods.⁶ He then makes his wife eat the mess of cooked food with the words ‘I add breath to thy breath, bones to thy bones, flesh to thy flesh, and skin to thy skin’⁷ Dr. MacDonell observes in connection with the wedding ceremony of the Hindus described above that “The main features of the nuptial ceremony of 3,000 years ago still survive in India”⁸

(vii) The Hindu Ideal of Marriage.

From the above long description of the rites and ceremonies of Vedic marriage and the several vows and pledges then uttered by the newly married couple before the sacred fire, the reader will easily understand how noble was the Hindu ideal of marriage. The

1. (9-47, N. S. 12-28). 2 (See history of Ancient Sanskrit literature by MacDonell) 3. (P. G. S. 1-8-8). 4. (Sh. G. S. 1-17-3, 4, A. G. S. 1-7-22). 5. (Sh. G. S. 1-17-2 to 6). 6. (Sh. G. S. 1-18) 7 (P. G. S. 1-11-1 to 5). 8. (See MacDonell’s history of Ancient Sanskrit Literature).

bride was not treated as a subordinate creature but she was made the queen and mistress of her new home (grīha patni). She was asked to rule over her father-in-law, brother-in-law, and the other members of her husband's family by gaining their affection by doing useful and loving services to the family. The Hindu ideal of life was one of eternal comradeship of husband and wife, not only for this life but also for the next life for spiritual and religious purposes and not for lust. There was complete identity of interests of husband and wife who were treated as joint comrades with peculiar duties assigned to them for discharging all functions, secular, religious, social or otherwise together and in union which brought about in the result perfect harmony, unity and spiritual elevation as would appear from the following verses in the marriage hymn of the Rig Veda which are repeated even to-day at every Hindu marriage as benedictions pronounced on the newly wedded couple. The said verses¹ run as follows:—"Here abide we not divided, complete life's whole allotted span, playing with your sons and grandsons, rejoicing in your own abode." The last verse is spoken by the bridegroom "May all the gods unite us two, May waters now entwine our hearts, May Mātariśvan, Dhātṛi and Dyaṁtṛi join us together." In fact, one could not even conceive of an idea of any unhealthy competition, rivalry or opposition between husband and wife for equality of rights as seen in the West, as according to the Vedic ideal of life they are complements of each other which find their being in a united whole which was incapable of any division or dissolution having achieved a complete unity of heart and soul within the universal self in its immanent aspect whose divine spark ever keeps alive in in their hearts fresh and vivid ideals of truth, beauty, and love, enabling them to conduce to the good of society as well as their own spiritual emancipation.

(6) Rules and regulations governing marriage and marital relations

(1) Selection and choice of husband.

We have already seen above that the Hindu marriage was a religious Sacrament accompanied with certain rites and ceremonies

1 (R. V. 10-85-42 to 47)

and it consisted of a gift of a virgin daughter of a marriageable age by her father to a husband belonging to the same caste chosen and selected by the former with the consent of his daughter, who had a hand in the selection of the husband as appears from the marriage hymn of the Rīg Veda.¹ In the time of the Rīg Veda the father did not force any match on his daughter without her consent. It was then customary for suitors to woo for the hand of maiden. Thus it is stated in the Rīg Veda. "How many a maid is pleasing to the suitor who fain would marry for her splendored riches; if the girl be both good and fair of feature she finds herself (i.e. by her own worth, independently of her dowry) a friend among the people."² The wooer sent special agents on his behalf to the father of the girl for wooing her hand and the choice of the husband was made finally by her father in consultation with the girl.³ In some cases girls themselves made a selection of the husband.⁴ This evidently points to the practice of *Svayamvara* (choice marriage), when a maiden of high rank used to offer herself as the prize to the conqueror in a contest of skill. This practice was however more to be seen in the kshatriyas (i.e. military class) than in other castes.

(ii) Age of Marriage.

As regards the age of marriage, no fixed rule is laid down by Manu. He only gives instances of suitable ages of marriage for a male and a female in the following verse, where he says "A man aged 30 years shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him or a man of 24 a girl 8 years of age, if the performance of his duties would otherwise be impeded, he may marry sooner."⁵ Both Medhātithi and Kulluka in their commentaries point out that this verse is not intended to lay down any hard and fast rule (*Vidha Niyama*) fixing any particular age of marriage. As a matter of fact, several alternative ages are given for marriage. Therefore it amounts to a *Vikalpa* or alternative act and not a *niyama* or obligatory rule. It may be mentioned here that in Vedic times girls were married at puberty as appears from the marriage hymn in the Rīg Veda wherein it is stated that the father of the bride Sūrya (sun) gave his daughter Sūryā in marriage to her suitor Soma (i.e. moon)

1. (R. V. 10-85-9). 2. (R. V. 10-27-11, 12). 3. (R. V. 10-85-9, 14, 15, 23).
 4. (R. V. 1-11-5). 5. (9-94).

with her consent which presupposes that she must have been of a sufficiently grown up age to give her intelligent and free consent to the choice of the husband made by her father and understand what was marital life and her responsibilities consequent thereon.¹ In the *Mahābhārata*, we find that there was a looseness of the marriage tie. It is said that "women were formerly unconfined and roamed about at their pleasure independent." A stop was however put to the above practice by *Svetakeśu* and the law givers framed special rules and restrictions both as regard marriage as also the age of marriage. Thus *Gotama*² made the rule that "one shall give his daughter in marriage before puberty (*Ritu*) or before she wears clothes according to the view of some." *Vasistha* says 'Fearing the approach of the time of puberty (*Ritu*) the father shall marry his daughter while she still runs about young (*Nagnikā*). If she remains in her father's house after puberty, she visits the father"³ "As often as the menstrual course of a maiden of marriageable age who is desirous of and is solicited in marriage by a qualified bridegroom of the same caste, so often her father and mother are guilty of the crime of killing an embryo such is the sacred law"⁴ Similarly *Nārada* says "Let no maiden suffer the period of maturity (*Ritu*) to come on without giving notice of it to her relations should they omit to give her in marriage they would be equal to the murderers of an embryo he who does not give such a maiden in marriage commits the crime of killing an embryo as many times as the period of menstruation passes by without her having a husband. Therefore a father must give his daughter in marriage once for all as soon as the signs of maturity become apparent. By acting other wise he would commit a heavy crime. Such is the rule settled among the virtuous"⁵ Other law-givers have even recommended the marriage of a maiden at the age of 8. 'A maiden 8 years old becomes a *Gauri*, one of nine years a *Rohini*, of 10 years a *Kanyā* (maiden) and after that a *Rajasvalā* i.e. a woman in menses."⁶ "Therefore one should espouse a maiden before she has menstruated the marriage of an eight years old maiden is most preferable"⁷ *Pārāśara*

1. (R. V. 10-85-9). 2. (G. D. S. 18-21 22 23). 3. (V. S. 17-70).
 4. (V. S. 17-71). 5. (N. S. 12-25 to 27). 6. (P. S. 7 4, S. S. 68).
 7. (S. S. 68).

however mentions the age of 12 as the upper limit for the marriage of a girl. He lays down the rule that a maiden must be given in marriage before 12, otherwise her parents drink her menstruation blood every month¹ He further says that "by seeing a maiden in menses her mother, father and elder brother—these three go to hell."² These statements about the marriageable age of a girl seem to be inconsistent with that of marriage of girls at maturity as seen in the Rig Veda. According to the well known canon of interpretation of Texts, whenever there is a conflict between S'ruti and Smṛiti S'ruti prevails. Therefore the Vedic rule regulating the marriage of mature girls ought to prevail. This interpretation is further supported by the explanation given in the *Gṛhya Saṃgraha Parīṣiṣṭha* attached *Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra* as follows. "(17) So long as a girl is not menstruating she is called *Nagnikā*. When she menstruates she is called *Rutumatī*, and one should give the latter in marriage, (18) A girl who has not had menstruation is called *Gaurī* while one who has menstruation is called *Rohini*. So long as she has no signs of maturity she is called *Kanyā* while one whose breasts are not developed is called *Nagnikā*, (19) As soon as there are visible signs of maturity the God Soma enjoys (i. e. protects) her as the guardian deity, with development of the breasts the Gandharva as her presiding deity protects her, while on the appearance of menstruation, Agni (fire) as her presiding deity protects her; (20) Therefore a girl who is devoid of any signs of maturity, menstruation and development of the breast and who is not enjoyed (i. e. protected) by the guardian deities Soma and others is not fit to be given in marriage." "Manu³ also lays down that "the husband receives his wife from gods, he does not wed her according to his own will." The idea of enjoyment or protection of a girl by the three deities, Soma, Gandharva and Agni before she is fit to be married, is taken from the hymn of the Rig Veda which says "Soma obtained her first of all, next the Gandharva was her lord, Agni was thy third husband. Now one born of woman (i. e. man) is thy fourth."⁴ Now if we just turn to Yājñavalkya Smṛiti, we will clearly understand what is meant by the marriage of a girl with the three gods mentioned above, before she is married to a man. Yājñavalkya states "Soma

hins conferred upon her purity Gandharva sweet speech, while Agni (fire) the most exalted state of holiness, washing away all her sins. Hence women are most holy.¹ The mention of Agni or fire refers to menstruation as would appear from the following statement in Vasistha "Women are extraordinarily holy. They are never tainted. The menstruation blood of theirs every month removes their sins. Women who were first enjoyed are protected by the three gods Soma, Gandharva, and Agni (fire) are then married with men. These are never tainted according to the law. Soma conferred on them purity, Gandharva refined speech, and fire (Agni) the most exalted state of holiness. Hence women are free from sin or impurity."² Vasistha further says "A woman is never contaminated by connection with her paramour. A woman should never be abandoned even if she is enjoyed by another by force or if she has fallen into the hands of thieves, for there is no abandonment of a woman laid down in the law. One should celebrate the season of woman's flowering (i.e. the period of puberty or Ritu). She is purified every time by the menstrual flow."³ The enjoyment of a girl by the three gods, Soma, Gandharva and fire, as her husbands successively before her marriage with a man as mentioned in the above text does not mean physical enjoyment or remarriage as wrongly interpreted by the Ārya Samajists, but it indicates and suggests her three physical states of development before marriage with a man, corresponding with the changes in her features, voice, and the menstrual appearance successively. This is supported by a verse in Samvarta smṛiti with a slight change "The moon enjoys a maiden when hairs grow on her person, seeing the menstrual blood the Gandharvas enjoy her, and seeing her rising breasts the fire."⁴ This interpretation which is based on express Vedic Texts cited above would clearly go to show that the marriage of a girl could be performed only after the appearance of menstruation, which was accompanied with heat (Agni). However, the authors of Smṛitis have positively laid down the rule of marrying a girl before Puberty (Ritu) as shown above. The explanation of this is two-fold. The first explanation is that the word Ritu (puberty) is used in a technical sense and it is not synonymous with

1. (Y S. 1-71). 2. (Y S. 28-4 to 6). 3. (Y S. 18-1 to 3). 4. (Sm S. 65,

menstruation but it means a physical state of fitness for conception indicated by the menstrual flow as explained by Kulluka in the following verse in Manu.¹ "Let the husband approach his wife in due season (Ritu Kāla)." The same meaning is given to the word Ritu in the Mitākshara on Yājñavalkya² who also enjoins that the persons qualified should give a maiden in marriage at any time before the time of puberty (Ritu) without fixing any particular age for giving her away in marriage. If they fail to do so they would be visited by the sin of destruction of foetus at every time of her menses. In the absence of a giver, a maiden should give herself away.³ According to Manu, conjugal union is allowed at the due season and time (Ritu) only when she is fit to conceive, and not before puberty, although she may have been married before the proper age, thus recognising a clear distinction between marriage and the act of union. Manu therefore only means that a girl must be married before she attains the age of puberty which varies from 12 to 16 according to climatic conditions. Taking the word Ritu to mean menstruation, a second explanation may be offered namely that the rule about marriage of girls before menstruation might have been laid down by the several Rishis to counteract the evil influences of extreme asceticism preached in the two new religions of Buddhism and Jainism which revolted against the Hindu Vedic religion and threatened to destroy it with all the rites and rituals enjoined therein. The law givers were then obliged to rearrange in a proper form all their religious literature and also Smṛitis and law books in the Buddhistic period and they framed stringent rules to preserve the Vedic religion with all its rites, dogmas and practices and they enjoined the early marriage of girls and a scrupulous observance of the rules incumbent on a householder as laid down for his order of life which was in danger of being wiped out by the new teachings of extreme asceticism and a life of celibacy, in the above 2 new religions. The performance of the Agnihotra and the five daily sacrifices (Pancha Yajna) on the part of a householder was emphasized, which necessitated the householder to marry a girl even at a comparatively earlier age. The practice of marrying young girls derived a further impetus from the advent of Mahomedan invaders to India when

2 (3-45). 3 (Y. S. 1-79). 4. (Y. S. 1-64).

life was insecure and the person, property and liberty of the people were in danger. However, the authors of the Smritis by their wise rules made a clear injunction against connubial union and cohabitation before the age of puberty which ranged from about 12 to 16 according to individual cases as also climatic conditions. Though Manu lays down the rule about giving a girl in marriage before puberty, yet he is averse to her being matched with an under-lying person and he seems to have paid attention to the rules of eugenics and sociology. So he has laid down the rule that a father should give his daughter to a distinguished, handsome suitor of equal caste, though she may not have attained the proper age.¹ But the maiden though marriageable should rather stay in the father's house until death than that he should ever give her to a man destitute of good qualities.² He further says "Three years, let a damsel wait though she may be marriageable but after that time let her choose for herself a bridegroom of equal caste and rank."³ Gotama however says that "a marriageable maiden who is not given in marriage shall allow three monthly periods to pass and afterwards unto herself of her own will to a blameless man giving up the ornaments received from her father."⁴ Nārada also similarly prescribes a period of 3 months upto which a betrothed girl who has reached puberty should wait, if her betrothed husband goes abroad before marriage and does not return home and then choose another husband herself.⁵ If being not given in marriage she herself seeks a husband, she incurs no guilt nor does he whom she weds. This verse will clearly show that even if a girl marries after a marriageable age as the above circumstances, she is not guilty of any sin. The question as regards the marriageable age of boys and girls has now been finally set at rest by the Child Marriage Restraint Act XI of 1929 otherwise known as the Sharda Act which forbids in express terms the marriage of a male under 18 years and a female under 14 years of age under penalty of simple imprisonment which may extend to one month or fine which may extend to Rs 1000/- or both, for breach of the above rule.

1 (0-88). 2 (9-80). 3 (0-90 V S 17-67, 68) 4 (G S. 18-20).

5 (N S. 12-24).

(iii) Period of marital consummation and regulations relating thereto.

Though there is no consensus of opinion among the law givers about the age of marriage of a girl, yet all of them are agreed in the view that a virgin girl must be married before the period of puberty (Ritu) which is accompanied with menstruation every month. Puberty is the special condition of a woman indicated by the appearance of menstrual blood when she is fit for conception as explained by Kulluka in his commentary on Manu Smṛiti¹ and by Vijnāneśvara in the Mitākshara being the well known commentary on Yājñavalkya smṛiti.² This was the time for marital co-habitation which was considered very sacred by the law givers as determining the most psychological moment in the life of a woman when she passes from the state of girlhood to that of womanhood and assumes the responsible position befitting her for conception and motherhood. It is observed as a sacrament (*Sanskāra*) called *Garbhādhāna* Sanskāra³ which is accompanied with certain religious ceremonies and celebrated even now as a religious act in the Mahānāshtra and other places in India. The married parties co-habit only after the above ceremony is completed. The law-givers have prescribed rules of injunction enjoining the husband of a married girl having attained maturity (Ritu) to consummate the marriage by approaching her at the prescribed season with a desire to beget a male offspring, so as to redeem the sacred debt that he owes to his father and a violation of the injunction is considered a sin, for which he is liable to punishment. Thus Manu says "The husband shall approach his wife in due season being constantly satisfied with her alone; he may also being intent on pleasing her, approach her with a desire for conjugal union on any day excepting the Parvas"⁴ Sixteen days and nights in each month including four days (viz, the 8th, the 14th, the 15th and the 30th days of every lunar month called *Parvas* which are prohibited by the virtuous for co-habitation) are called the natural season of women⁵ But among these the first four, the eleventh and the thirteenth days from the commencement of menses are forbidden, the remaining nights are recommended."⁶ Gotama has also made an injunction

1 (3-45). 2. (Y. S 1-79). 3 (G. G. S 2-5-9). 4 (3-45). 5. (3-46).
6. (3-47).

that "a householder shall approach his wife in the proper season or he may do so at any time except on the forbidden days"¹ The sage Yājñavalkya also makes a similar injunction. He says "Sixteen days or nights commencing with the day of menses are the consummation period (Ritu kala) of the womankind. Of them one should know his wife on the night of an even day. This is Brahmacharyam. On the other hand one should avoid parva days (the four days prohibited for co-habitation as specified above) and the first four days of the menses. Remembering the row of women, being faithfully devoted to one's own wife, and being influenced by desire proportionate to hers, one can know his wife even at any other time except the menstrual period, for it is laid down in the Smritis that women should be protected by every means.² A menstruating woman becomes pure after taking bath on the fourth day and after the disappearance of her menses only she becomes fit for religious purposes connected with the gods and the manes of the deceased fathers as well as for marital and household purposes.³ One is forbidden to touch a woman in menses or have an intercourse with her during the first four days until she has taken her bath.⁴ The husband is enjoined to approach his wife on the day of her menstrual ablation and if he fails to do so, he is guilty of the dreadful sin of infanticide.⁵ Pārāshara lays down a further rule for women and he says "the woman who having bathed at the close of her menstrual uncleanness, does not share the bed of her husband that day, goes to hell after death and is doomed to suffer the pangs of widowhood in successive re-births."⁶ Gobhila in his Gṛhiya Sūtras gives two views about the time for co-habitation. According to one view which is that of Shāṅkhāyana, the time for co-habitation is after three nights succeeding the marriage have passed.⁷ But according to the other view which is that of Gobhila the time for co-habitation is when the newly-wedded wife after reaching her husband's house has had her monthly sickness and the blood has ceased to flow.⁸ Parāshara in his Gṛhiya Sūtras gives other opinions on the subject. Thus he says "Through a

1. (G. S. 5-1, 2). 2. (Y. S. 1-70). 3. (Y. S. 1-81). 4. (P. S. 7-15, 17).

5. (P. S. 7-18, 19). 6. (P. S. 4-15). 7. (P. S. 4-14). 8. (Sh. G. S. 1-17-5).

9. (G. G. S. 2-5-7, 8).

period of three nights succeeding the marriage, the husband and wife shall eat no saline food, they shall sleep on the ground, through one year they shall refrain from conjugal intercourse or through a period of twelve nights or of six nights or at least of three nights.¹ The great sage Sushruta a leading authority on Medicine prohibits a person from procreating any issue in his wife of very young age on the ground that if a man under twenty-five begets a child in a woman under sixteen, the child is either still-born or short-lived or is of feeble body.² It would seem from the above, that the proper age for consummation according to the Indian Medical opinion would be 16 for a woman and 25 for a man.

The sage Āpastamba lays down the following regulations to govern the holy act of marital consummation "Let him have connection with his wife at the proper time according to the rules of the law. Let him have connubial intercourse in the interval also, if his wife desires it observing the restrictions imposed by the law. The duty of connubial intercourse follows from the passage of a Bṛāhmaṇa 'Let us dwell together until a son is born'.³ But during intercourse he shall be dressed in a particular dress kept for this purpose. And during intercourse only they shall lie together, but separate afterwards. Then they both shall bathe."⁴ With regard to the several regulations about the approach of a husband to his wife in the due season laid down in Manu Smṛiti.⁵ Kulluka Bhatta summarises the same in the form of the following rules --

(1) The rule enjoining a husband to approach his wife in due season amounts to an injunction (*Nyama*) which is a positive rule having an obligatory force until the birth of a son and any violation of the rule on the part of the husband is sinful. (2) After the birth of a son, the said rule is not mandatory and it loses its binding force and is construed as a *Parisankhyā* which is a negative rule its object being only to teach that the husband is not bound to approach his wife but if he desires to approach her, he shall not do so at any time except in due season as mentioned in Manu. (3) To this rule however there is an exception viz when the wife expresses any

1. (6 P. G. S. 1-8-21, A. G. S. (1-8-10,11). 2. (Sushruta 10-47,48).

3. (T. S. 2-5-1-5). 4. (A. D. S. 2-1-17 to 23). 5. (3-45).

desire for having the society of her husband, in that event it is obligatory (*Niyama*) on the part of the husband to approach her, as it was a privilege extended to woman by the boon of God Indra (4) A further rule is again laid down by the law-givers that a man may approach his wife only and no other woman. This rule is only a *Parisankhya* which is negative. I shall speak more of these rules of interpretation when I shall deal with the subject of *Mimamsa* in which these rules are considered. From the above wise rules laid down by the law-givers, one could easily understand that their main object in framing the said rules was to exercise a healthy controlling influence on the sexual instincts and appetites of human beings by regulating all marital relations and providing for the begetting of strong, beautiful, and healthy children having religious tendencies free from lust, from the very birth. In fact, Manu has exercised an effective check on the reckless multiplication of issues by laying down the rule based on the scripture enjoining the married couple to beget only one son to discharge the debt that a person owes to his father and ancestors, and thereafter to have recourse to a spiritual life if the parties are religiously minded. He therefore calls the first son only as a religiously born son through whom one obtains immortality while he calls the rest as born of desire¹. In spite of this, a new rule directly opposed to the scriptures and the *Dharmaśāstras* based thereon, has been sought to be deduced by the school of Reformers known as the *Ārya Samāja*, from a certain text of the *Rigveda*,² as enjoining the newly married husband and wife to beget 10 sons and marry 11 wives and husbands respectively in succession on the death of their former partner. The formula of the above text runs as follows: "May you beget in this lady 10 sons making the husband the 11th" and it is repeated even at present by the *Brāhmana* priests at the celebration of every *Vedic* marriage in *Brahma* form, evidently with the object of conferring blessings on the newly married couple. It is therefore merely an *Ārtihavada* passage containing words of benediction, commendation and eulogy and it would be a clear misinterpretation of the holy text to deduce from it any rule of injunction (*Vidhi Niyama*) enjoining the begetting of ten sons or remarriage with 11 wives and husbands respectively as advocated by the *Ārya*

Samājists. In fact the begetting of more sons than one is not a religious act enjoined in the scriptures, but it is an act of desire to satisfy one's animal instinct. Further, it would be an absurd construction of the above text on the part of the reformers to deduce therefrom a rule justifying the remarriage of a woman with 11 husbands as would appear even from a superficial examination of the text which only expresses a pious wish on the part of the priests in clear terms that the newly married wife even after begetting ten sons by her husband may not become a widow but that she may be blessed enough to see her husband then alive to be counted as the eleventh person along with her ten sons begotten by him. It would be even contrary to human nature to think of widowhood of the newly wedded bride on the very auspicious day of her marriage. As regards the practice of Niyoga sought to be supported by the above text, in the Ārya Samāja sect, it may be stated here that although the said practice was undoubtedly in vogue in the Vedic times of hoary antiquity, it fell into disrepute shortly thereafter being a beastly act as stated by Manu and was discontinued. It was definitely prohibited for the Kali Yuga as stated by the Law-givers. The above interpretation therefore of the holy Vedic text on the part of Ārya Samājists evidently to support reform will appear untenable in light of the above discussion and is directly in conflict with the texts in Manu which are based on the scriptures and the high ideals of religious life inculcated therein, with which the modern reformers want to play fast and loose.

(iv) Rights and duties of husband and wife.

Need of safeguards for the protection of women.

According to Manu, women must be under the protection of the males of their families and if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments they must be kept under one's control.¹ Her father protects her in her childhood, her husband in her youth and sons in her old age. A woman should never be kept devoid of protection.² Reprehensible is the father who does not give his daughter in marriage at the proper time, reprehensible is the husband who

1. (9-2). 2. (9-3).

approaches not his wife in due season and reprehensible is the son who does not protect his mother, after her husband has died.¹ Women must be particularly guarded against evil inclinations however trifling they may appear, for if they are not guarded they will bring sorrow on two families.² Considering that to be the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands must strive to guard and protect their wives.³ Knowing their disposition which the Lord of creatures laid in them at the creation (viz., fickleness, going astray etc.,) every man should strenuously exert himself to guard them.⁴ He who carefully guards his wife preserves the purity of his offspring, virtuous conduct, his family, himself and his means of acquiring merit.⁵

Means for protection of women.

No man can completely guard women by force but they can be guarded by the following expedients.⁶ Let the husband employ his wife in the collection and expenditure of his wealth in keeping everything clean in the fulfilment of religious duties (e.g. in connection with the household-fire etc.,) preparation of his food and in looking after the household utensils.⁷

Duties of Women.

Bṛhaspati lays down the following duties of women.⁸ A woman must be restrained from slight transgressions even by her relations.⁹ Let not a woman reside in another man's house separated from her father, husband or sons by giving way to malicious propensity particularly, she is sure to lose her reputation.¹⁰ Rising before the others, paying reverence to the elders of the family, preparing food and condiments and using a low seat and bed thus have the duties of women been declared.¹¹ Drinking, rambling abroad, sleeping by day and neglect of her daily duties are faults disgracing a woman.¹² That wife is declared to be devoted to her husband who is afflicted when he is afflicted pleased when he is happy and squalid and languid when he is absent.¹³ While a husband is absent, a woman must avoid decorating herself as well as dancing, singing

1. (9-4). 2. (9-5). 3. (9-6). 4. (9-15 16). 5. (9-7). 6. (9-10).
7. (10 11, B. S. 24-4). 8. (B. S. 24-2) 9. (B. S. 24-5). 10. (B. S. 24-6)
11. (B. S. 24-7). 12. (B. S. 24-8).

looking on at public spectacles or festivals.¹ A wife practising religious austerities, fasting and preserving chastity, self-controlled and liberal always, goes to heaven even though she has no son.²

Manu declares the following as the six causes of the ruin of women viz, Drinking, associating with wicked people, separation from the husband, rambling abroad, sleeping at unreasonable hours and dwelling in other men's house³ He lays down the following duties of women A woman should never be infidel towards her husband⁴ The production of children, the nurture of those born, and the daily life of men, of these matters woman is visibly the cause.⁵ Offspring, the due performance of religious rites, faithful service, highest conjugal happiness and heavenly bliss for the ancestors and one self depend on one's wife alone.⁶ She who controlling her thoughts, speech, and acts, violates not her duty towards her lord dwells with him after death in heaven and in this world is called by the virtuous, faithful wife (*Sadhvi*).⁷ But for disloyalty to her husband, a wife is censured among men and in her next life she is born in the womb of a jackal and tormented by diseases as a punishment for her sin.⁸ A female must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband or sons, by leaving them she would make both her own and her husband's families contemptible.⁹ She must be always cheerful, clever in management of her household affairs, careful in cleansing her utensils and economical in expenditure¹⁰ It was the supreme duty of a faithful wife to constantly worship her husband as a God though devoid of good qualities.¹¹ No sacrifice, no vow, no fast, must be performed by women apart from their husbands. If a wife obeys her husband she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven¹² A Virtuous wife (*sadhvi*) is one who never slights her lord and she resides after her death with her husband in heaven.¹³ A faithful wife who desires to dwell after death with her husband must therefore never do anything that might displease him who took her hand whether he be alive or dead¹⁴ By violating her duty towards her husband a wife is disgraced in this world, and after

1. (B S 24-9) 2. (B. S. 24-10). 3 (9-13). 4. (9-21). 5. (9-27).
 6. (9-28). 7. (9-29). 8. (9-30). 9. (5-149). 10. (5-150). 11. (5-154).
 12. (5-155). 13. (5-165, 166). 14. (5-156).

death she enters the womb of a jackal and is tormented by diseases as a punishment for her sin¹

Duties of women in distressed times

We shall now consider the duties of women in times of distress. Manu has first laid down the rule that a man who has to go abroad on a journey for business should make suitable provision for maintenance of his wife for a wife even though virtuous may be corrupted if she be distressed for want of subsistence.² If the husband went on a journey after providing for her, the wife shall subject herself to restraint in her daily life but if he departed without providing for her she may subsist by blameless manual work such as spinning, sewing, embroidery etc.,³ Manu has taken particular care to emphasize that a wife must not place herself in any situation whereby her chastity which was her highest treasure and on which the purity of the whole race depended may be in any way endangered.

Duties of husband

Manu also imposes corresponding duties on the husband. Thus he enjoins the husband to always support his wife while she is faithful and to protect and maintain her.⁴ To be mothers, were women created and to be fathers, men, religious rites therefore are ordained in the Veda to be performed by the husband together with the wife.⁵ Manu further enjoins husband as well as other relations of a woman to honour them if they desire their own welfare. Where they are so honoured, their Gods are pleased where they are not so honoured no sacred rite yields rewards.⁷ Where female relations live in grief and are not duly honoured, the family soon wholly perishes.⁶ Hence men who seek their own welfare and happiness should always honour women with food, clothes and ornaments⁸ for they are like goddesses of fortune in homes which are enlightened by them.¹⁰

Mutual co-operation the highest ideal of duty for husband and wife.

Mutual co-operation was the highest ideal of duty for husband and wife as laid down by Manu and the other law givers. Whatever

1 (5-164).	2 (9-74)	3 (9-75)	4 (9-95)	5 (9-96).
6 (3-55).	7 (3-56).	8. (3-57, 58)	9 (3-59)	10 (9-26).

be the qualities of the man with whom a woman is united according to the law, such qualities even she assumes like a river united with the ocean.¹ Akshamālā (or Arundhati) a woman of low caste by birth being united to Vasiṣṭha became worthy of honour² Thus females of low births have attained eminence in this world by acquiring good qualities of their husbands.³ A wife has community of interest with her husband According to Manu ' the husband is declared to be one with the wife '⁴ While according to Brihaspati she is considered half the body of her husband equally sharing the result of his good or wicked deeds, whether she ascends the pile after him or chooses to survive him leading a virtuous life, she promotes the welfare of her husband⁵ Manu summarises the law of duties for husband and wife by laying down the following rules (1) " Let mutual fidelity continue until death. " ⁶ (11) " Let man and woman united in marriage constantly exert themselves that they may not be disunited and may not violate their mutual fidelity. " ⁷ The above rules will at once give the reader an idea that in laying down the duties for husband and wife, Manu has not shown any partiality towards man, but has kept the scales of justice even for both men and women In short both of them are enjoined to lead a chaste and virtuous life and act in harmony and loving co-operation for a common purpose and not in separation or opposition which is repugnant to the Hindu Shāstrās.

Duties of widows.

Of all virtues to be observed by women, Manu has mentioned chastity as the highest A woman is enjoined to lead a chaste and virtuous life both during the lifetime of her husband as well as after his death For widows, Manu has laid down the rule that they should lead a simple and virtuous life after the death of their husbands. Thus he says " At her pleasure let her emaciate her body by living on pure flowers, roots and fruit, but she must never even mention the name of another man after her husband has died ⁸ Until death, let her be patient of hardships, self-controlled, and chaste, and strive to fulfil that most excellent duty which is prescribed for wives who have one husband (*Ekapatni*) only ⁹ Many

1. (9-22). 2. (9-23) 3. (9-24) 4. (9-45) 5. (B S. 24-11).
6. (9-101). 7. (9-102). 8. (5-157). 9. (5-158).

thousands of Brahmins who were chaste from their youth have gone to heaven without continuing their race.¹ A virtuous wife who after the death of her husband constantly reminds chaste reaches heaven though she might have no son just like those chaste men.² But a woman who from a desire to have offspring violates her duty towards her deceased husband brings on herself disgrace in this world and loses her place with her husband in heaven (*Patilky*).³

The custom of Sati or self-immolation of widow

It appears from certain verses in the funeral hymns of the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda that there was an old custom for widow to immolate herself in the fire along with her deceased husband on the funeral pyre. Dr Macdonell in this connection makes the following observations: "The fact that in the funeral obsequies of the Rig Veda, the widow lies down beside the body of her deceased husband and his bow is removed from the deceased man's hand shows that both were in earlier times burnt with his body to accompany him to the next world and a verse of the Atharva Veda calls the dying of the widow with her husband an old custom (*Purana Dharma*). The evidence of anthropology shows that this was a very primitive practice widely prevailing at the funerals of military chiefs and it can be proved to go back to the Indo-European age."⁴ Mr Romesh Chandra Dutta has expressed an opinion that the custom of becoming Sati on the part of a widow by immolating herself in the fire along with her deceased husband had an existence in Vedic times. Mr Frazer however has remarked to the effect that it would be presumptuous to assert from one solitary hymn in the Atharva Veda that the custom of Sati had no existence in the Vedic times that it was a very old custom which had survived until recent times and further it is described as an old custom in the Atharva Veda. Mr Frazer gives a better explanation of the Vedic hymn regarding the statement about the taking back home of the widow alive from the funeral pyre that very likely the custom of Sati might not have existed in the family of the Rishi who composed the said hymn. The custom of a widow becoming Sati after her husband had been landed as

1 (5-160) 2 (5-160). 3 (5-161). 4 (Macdonell's history of S.L.).

very meritorious by some of the law givers and it was largely prevalent in India until recently, among some of the Kshatriya princes and chiefs whose widows burnt themselves alive on the death of their husbands. Pārāsara in this connection says "The lady who follows into the next world along with her deceased husband (i.e. becomes a Sati) remains in the heaven for a period of three crores years and a half being equal to the number of hairs on a man's body."¹ "The lady (becoming Sati after her husband) liberates him from all sins like a catcher of serpent who extricates the serpent from a hole by force of Vedic Mantras, and she enjoys celestial pleasures in the heaven in company with her Lord."² Manu also bestows the highest praise on a widow who leads a virtuous and chaste life after the death of her husband. However the custom of Sati has since been abolished by the law as administered in British courts and any attempt on the part of a widow to become a Sati by burning herself alive on the death of her husband is an offence under the Indian Penal Code XLV of 1860 amounting to an attempt to commit suicide and as such it is punishable under section 309 of the I. P. Code and any one who instigates a woman to become Sati is guilty of the offence of abetment of suicide under Section 336 of the I P C.

(v) Maintenance of wife and widow.

(a) Duty of husband to maintain his wife.

A wife who leaves her home for purposes of adultery and persists in following a vicious course of life, forfeits her right to maintenance, even though it is secured by a decree. But from a recent decision of the Bombay High Court, it appears that if she completely renounces her immoral course, her husband is liable to furnish her with a bare or starving maintenance i.e. food and raiment just sufficient to support her life³. In the above case the late Mr. Justice Chandavalkar after examining the original texts bearing on the subject observed as follows "The general rule to be gathered from these (i.e. the texts) is that a Hindu wife cannot be absolutely abandoned by her husband. If she is living an unchaste life, he is bound to keep her in the house under restraint and

1 (4-32). 2 (4-33). 3. (Parani vs. Mahadevi, 34 Bom. 278)

provide her with food and raiment just sufficient to support life she is not entitled to any other right. If however she repents, returns to purity and performs expiatory ceremonies, she becomes entitled to all conjugal and social rights unless her adultery was with a man of a lower caste in which case after expiation she can claim no more than bare maintenance and residence¹

(b) Widows right to maintenance

A widow who does not succeed to the estate of her husband as his heir is entitled to maintenance out of her husband's separate property, and also out of property in which he was a co-parcener at the time of his death. A widow does not lose her right of maintenance out of the estate of her husband even though she may have lived apart from him in his life time without any justifying cause and was living separate from him at the time of his death.

(c) Forfeiture of maintenance by widows unchastity

The right of a widow to maintenance is conditional upon her preserving unsullied the bed of her lord and leading a life of chastity. If she becomes unchaste, the right is forfeited, even if it has been secured by a decree or by an agreement. But if she returns to a moral life, she is entitled to bare maintenance i.e. food and raiment just sufficient to support her life².

A widow by remarriage forfeits her right to maintenance out of the estate of her first husband³. The High Court of Allahabad has held that a widow who is allowed to remarry according to the custom of her caste, does not by remarriage forfeit her right to maintenance out of the estate of her husband⁴. The High Court of Bombay on the other hand has held that she forfeits her right⁵. Sir D. F. Mulla in this connection makes the following observations in his Hindu Law "The whole point is whether the provisions of the Hindu widows Remarriage Act 1856 apply to the case of a remarriage where such remarriage is allowed by the custom of the caste. If they do, a widow by remarriage forfeits all interest in her husband's property whether it be by inheritance to her husband or by way of maintenance out of his property. If they do not, she does not

1 (Parami vs. Mahadovi, 34 Bom. 278). 2 (H. W. R. Act XV of 1856 S. 2)
3, (40 All. 203). 4 (Yithu vs. Govind 22 Bom. 321 Rannade J.)

forfeit either of those rights. The Allahabad High Court holds the latter view. The other High Courts hold the former view and they have accordingly decided that a widow on remarriage forfeits her interest in the estate inherited by her from her first husband even though the remarriage is allowed by the custom of the caste. No case has arisen in those Courts as to the right of such a widow to maintenance out of the property of her first husband but it is clear that if such a case did arise, the right would be negatived."

(vi) Adoption by husband and wife.

(a) Adoption by husband.

The peculiar necessity for male offspring pressed upon the Āryans on account of their religious system. This want was amply met by the early Hindu law, which provided 12 sorts of sons all of whom were competent to prevent a failure of obsequies in the absence of legitimate issue.¹ However at first an adopted son was held in low esteem as is evidenced by the low rank he held in the order of sons as stated by Yājñyavalkya and Nārada. But Manu favours the adopted son. When the number of subsidiary sons was diminished in course of time as stated above, the importance of the adopted sons naturally increased. According to the Brāhmāṇical theory, the primary motive of adoption was religious viz., to gratify the manes of the ancestors by annual offerings. According to Mayne however, the spiritual theory was not the sole object of adoption, even upon Brāhmāṇical principles and the motive was also secular viz., for celebrity of one's name after death and due perpetuation of lineage. In fact this was the sole motive of adoption in the case of the non-Āryan tribes and the classes who dissented from orthodox Hinduism such as the Jains. The whole Sanskrit law of adoption is evolved from two texts and a metaphor. The Metaphor is that of Saunaka viz., "that the boy to be adopted must be the reflection of a son" and he was to look as much like a real son as possible. The brother's son was generally preferred for adoption. The texts are of Manu and Vasistha. Thus Manu says "He whom his father or mother gives to another as his son, provided that the donee has no issue, if the boy be of the same class and affectionately

1, (M. S. 9-180.)

disposed is considered as a son given the gift being confirmed by pointing water.¹ Vasishtha says: 'But the parents have power to give him. But let no man give or accept an only son since he must remain to make up a progeny for the descendants of ancestors.'² All sons who were recognised in former times fell into disrepute in course of time and there remained only two kinds of sons viz, natural son or the natural born son and the adopted son who were considered legitimate. The adopted son became invested with all the legal rights of a natural born son and was entitled to inheritance not only to the property of the person adopting but also of all persons related to him through the latter either on the father's or on the mother's side.

(b) Adoption by wife

As an adoption is made solely to the husband and for his benefit he is competent to effect it without his wife's consent and notwithstanding her dissent.³ For the same reason she can adopt to no one but her husband. An adoption made to herself except where *Krishna* form is allowed would be wholly invalid.⁴ Nor can she ever adopt to her husband during his life time except with his assent.

(c) Adoption by widow

As regards the capacity of a widow to adopt a son to her deceased husband after his death whether with or without his assent, there are four different opinions each of which is settled to be law in the province where it prevails. The right of a widow to adopt is based on the text of Vasishtha which says: 'Not let a woman give or accept a son unless with the assent of her lord.'⁵ But the *Mithila* school apparently takes this to mean that the assent of the husband must be given at the time of the adoption and therefore a widow cannot receive a son in adoption according to the *Dattaka* form at all. The *Bengal* school interprets the text as requiring an express permission by the husband in his life time but capable of taking effect after his death. The doctrine of the *Benares* school is the same as that of *Bengal*. The *Bombay* school on the other hand explains the text away by saying: 'That

1 (0-168) 2 (V D S 15-1 to 4). 3 (4 M I A 2). 4 (12 M I A 356).
5 (V D S. 15-5).

it applies only to an adoption made in the husband's life time and is not to be taken to restrict the widow's power to do that which the general law prescribes as beneficial to her husband's soul¹ A fourth view was established by the Judicial committee in a case from southern India viz that in *southern India* the want of the the husband's assent may be supplied by that of his sapindas In the Bombay presidency however the law was that a widow may adopt without express authority from her husband subject to certain conditions. As regards the widow whose husband was joint with other co-parceners of a joint and undivided Hindu family at the time of his death, the law until recently was to the effect that she could not adopt without the consent of her father-in-law and in his absence her husband's undivided co-parceners and there was a string of decisions of the Bombay High Court to that effect. But a revolution was made by a decision of the Privy council in *Yādav vs. Nāmdeva*² where it was observed by the Privy council that in the Marattha country of the Bombay presidency and in Gujarat, a widow whose husband had not expressly forbidden her to adopt a son to him, had power to adopt without the consent of her husband's kinsmen whether or not her husband's estate had vested in her and whether he died joint or separate in property. These observations of the Privy council were however held to be *Obiter Dicta* in a later case decided by a full Bench of the Bombay High Court³ This last case however has been overruled by another case recently decided by the Privy council in which the judgment was given by the late Sir Dinsha Mulla.⁴ According to this decision therefore the ruling of the Privy council in the case of *Yādav vs Nāmdeva*⁵ still holds good as law in the Marattha country, and the widow of a co-parcener who was a member of a joint and undivided Hindu family is perfectly competent to adopt without express authority of her husband or the consent of the surviving co-parceners for the reason that the act of adoption is a religious act meant to do spiritual good to the soul of the deceased and that secular considerations ought not to override religious considerations It will be seen from

1. (12 M I A. 435) 2. (48 I A. 513). 3. (*Ishvar Dadu Vs Gajabai* 50 Bom 468 F. B). 4. (*Bhimabai v. Gurunathgauda* 35 Bom. L. R. 200 P. C).
5 (48 I A. 513)

the above that at least so far as the Bombay Presidency is concerned, very wide powers are secured to widows to adopt a son to their deceased husbands for religious purposes, thus obviating the necessity of Niyoga or remarrying of widows for begetting offspring

(vii) Niyoga or the practice of begetting a son on the wife of another by a religious appointment or commission

Among the various sorts of sons recognized by the early writers may be mentioned the son begotten by a person on the wife of another (Kshetrāja) by a religious appointment or commission called Niyoga which was based on an authorisation given to her for the purpose. Such a son was clearly not begotten by the husband but he came to be considered as his son by a peculiar theory of paternity which was based on the old practice of Niyoga which had prevailed since the Vedic times. In the early times the male issue was prized most on account of the necessity for protecting one self against the attacks of enemies in those unsettled days as also for one's support in old age and sickness. Not only so, but the male offspring was considered necessary for securing happiness in the next world after death which depended upon one's having a continuous line of male descendants whose duty it was to make periodical offerings (Pindas) to secure repose of the soul of his deceased ancestors. Hence according to the lawgivers the first duty of a man was to become the possessor of male offspring.¹ It was therefore quite natural that all sorts of devices were invented by the lawgivers to procure for a person a son even by a fiction. Manu while discussing the theory of paternity as regards the property in a child begotten on the wife of one by another argues on the analogy of seed sown by a stranger on the land of another or of flocks impregnated by a strange male and observes. "Thus men who have no marital property in women but sow in the fields owned by others may raise up fruit to the husbands but the procreator can have no advantage from it. Unless there be a special agreement between the owners of the land and of the seed, the fruit belongs clearly to the landowner for the receptacle is more important than the seed." Manu however deprecates the

1 (6-36 37 9-45). 2. (9-32 to 44 48 to 55).

practice of Niyoga. He says: "On comparing the seed and the receptacle of the seed, the seed is more important, for the offspring of all created beings is marked by the characteristics of the seed."¹ 'Whatever seed is sown, a plant of that kind even comes forth'² Never therefore must a prudent man who knows the Vedas and desires long life co-habit with the wife of another³ as it is laid down in an old Gāthā that seed must not be sown by any man on that which belongs to another.⁴ Manu observes that in the sacred texts which refer to marriage the appointment of widows is nowhere mentioned.⁵ This practice which is reprehended by the learned of the twice born castes as fit for cattle is said to have occurred among men while Vena (the immoral king) ruled.⁶ That royal chief who formerly possessed the whole world caused a confusion of the castes (*Varnasankaram*) his intellect being destroyed by lust.⁷ Since that time the virtuous censure that man who in his folly appoints a woman whose husband died to bear children to another man.⁸ Mr. Mayne observes on the origin of Niyoga in his Hindu law as follows. "It was upon the principle viz that a son by whomsoever begotten was the property of the husband of the mother that the kshetrāja so begotten upon a wife ranked so high in the list of subsidiary sons." He cites instances from the Mahābhārata and Vishnu Purāna of kings Saudāsa and Pāndu having induced Vasistha and Vyāsa to beget for them sons upon their wives by the practice of Niyoga. And so the lawbooks expressly sanctioned the begetting of offspring by Niyoga by a person on the wife of another who was impotent, or disordered in mind or incurably diseased.⁹

The begetting of offspring upon the widow of a man who had left no issue is merely an extension of the practice described above. Mr. Mayne however points out the following distinction between the 2 cases viz, that in the latter case, the husband became the father not by any fiction of paternity but by the simple fact that he was the owner of the mother. But in the former case, the element of fiction was introduced as after his death the husband's ownership of the wife had ceased to exist except by a fiction of paternity. So an express authorisation was necessary for the beget-

1. (9-35) 2. (9-40) 3. (9-41) 4. (9-42). 5. (9-65). 6. (9-66)
 7. (9-67) 8. (9-68) 9. (9-167 V. D. S. 17-14, 56, N. S. 12-97).

ting of offspring by one on the widow of another. There were also certain other restrictions on the right of a widow to beget male offspring to her deceased husband through another person viz. that she should have no male issue in existence that the connection was not to be continued further than was necessary for the purpose of conception, that the permission to beget a son was not to be for more than one son or at most two sons, and lastly the connection by the widow was not to be with any one but only with the brother of the deceased if possible or a near sapinda relation. In the opinion of Mr. Mynne Niyoga as practised among the Āryan Hindus was not a survival of polyandry as the issue so raised belonged to the deceased person by a fiction of paternity and not to the begetter nor for the same reason is Niyoga the same as the notional remarriage of a widow with the brother of her deceased husband as wrongly interpreted by the Ārya Samajist reformers. The above practice however died away in course of time as soon as the idea of mutual fidelity and decency arose as an element in the marriage union and the relations between husband and wife became more refined as in the time of the compilation of Manu Smṛiti. Not only Manu but several other lawgivers also after him like Brihaspati, Pārāshara and others have also condemned Niyoga.¹ This practice was particularly prohibited for the Kaliyuga as decrease of power has been ordained for the human race in this age.²

(viii) Widow remarriage whether sanctioned in the Dharm Shāstras and if so how far?

The verdict of Mann is clearly against widow remarriage. He declares that a man may only marry a virgin and a widow may not marry again. Thus he says "The nuptial texts are applied solely to virgins and nowhere among men to females who have lost their virginity for such females are excluded from religious ceremonies (*Lupṭa Dharmakṛiyā*)"³ "In the sacred texts which refer to marriage the appointment of widows (Niyoga) is nowhere mentioned nor is the remarriage of widows prescribed in the rules concerning marriage"⁴ "A woman who from a desire to have offspring violates her duty

1. (B. S. 24-12 25-41 P. 8 4-54). 2. (B. S. 24 13) 3. (8-226), 4. (9-65)

towards her deceased husband brings on herself disgrace in this world and loses her place with her husband in heaven.¹ Offspring begotten by another man is here not considered lawful nor does offspring begotten on another man's wife belong to the begetter nor is a second husband anywhere prescribed for virtuous women (*Sādhvī*)”² “She who co-habits with a man of a higher caste forsaking her own husband who belongs to a lower one, will become contemptible in this world and is called a remarried woman (*Parāpūrvā*)”³ The only exception which Manu appears to allow is in the case of a virgin who has been betrothed and whose husband has died before marriage and for whom he lays down that she may be married again to the brother of the deceased husband.⁴ This is however construed by the commentators as an application of *Niyoga* which was accepted so far only by Manu and by *Mitākshara* which follows Manu in this respect.⁵ It appears from the above that in former times if the betrothed husband of a girl died before actual marriage, others refused to marry such a girl and she was married with the brother of her deceased betrothed husband by *Niyoga*. However the above hard rule was relaxed later on and permission was given by the lawgivers to a girl on the death of her betrothed husband to marry with another person as she was still a virgin so long as the marriage Sacrament was not completed by taking seven steps before the nuptial fire. This principle is also recognised by Manu who says “The nuptial texts are a certain proof that a wife has been made a lawful wife. But the learned should know that they and the marriage ceremony are complete with the seventh step of the bride before the sacred fire.”⁶ The bride's father had therefore authority over her so long as the marriage ceremony was not thus completed and he can give her in marriage as a virgin a second time to another person.⁷ This interpretation also finds support in *Yājñavalkya*⁸ who lays down that a betrothal once effected can be cancelled on the ground of certain faults discovered later on in the betrothed husband and the girl could be given in marriage to a better and a more qualified person. On the other hand two other texts in Manu appear to sanction the second marriage either of a widow or of

1. (5-161) 2. (5-162) 3. (5-163, A. D. S 2-6-13-4). 4. (9-69, 70).
 5. (Y. S. 1-69). 6. (8-227). 7. (V. D S 17-72, 73). 8. (Y. S. 1-65).

a wife forsaken by her husband. Thus he says "If a woman abandoned by her husband or a widow of her own accord contracts a second marriage and bears a son he is called the son of a remarried woman" (*Paunarhlara*)¹ "If she be still a virgin (*Idhuta* Yoni) or one who returned to her first husband after leaving him she is fit to again perform with her second or first deserted husband the nuptial ceremony." Thus Manu allows remarriage of virgin widows only but not of those who became widows after they were known by their husbands. Rāghavānanda however one of the commentators of Manu Smṛiti holds a contrary view and he interprets the verse in an alternative sense (*Idalya*) from the use of the word *Ya* (or) at the end of the first half verse and not in a restricted sense limited only to the case mentioned in the verse thus allowing even non-virgin widows to re-marry. However what ever may be the construction of the verse the re-marriage of widow even in the 2 cases mentioned in Manu was always looked upon with great disfavour by the high caste Hindu being directly opposed to the sacramental theory of Hindu marriage in the Brahman form according to which the marriage tie was indissoluble even on death of the husband. The word '*Punacvambhara*' used in the said verse by Manu in connection with such second marriage means a purification or a penance for marrying second time a girl who was already given in marriage once when she was a virgin (*Kanyā*) by Vedic Mantras uttered on the occasion. According to Manu a virgin can be given in marriage once only. He says 'Once is the partition of the liberation made, once is a maiden given in marriage and once does a man say 'I will give' each of these three acts is done once only"² He further says "Let no prudent man after giving his daughter to one man give her again to another for he who gives his daughter whom he had given before incurs the guilt of speaking falsely regarding a human being"³ In short Manu prohibits in express terms a second gift of the same girl who had been given in marriage once as a virgin. The remarriage therefore of widow even in the 2 cases mentioned in Manu Smṛiti cannot amount to a gift of virgin (*Kanyā dāna*) which constitutes the very essence of the Hindu

1. (9-175 V D S. 17-18 B D S. 2-3-27 VI. S. 15-7 to 9 Y S 2-130.)

2. (9-176, V D S. 17-74) 3. (9-47). 4. (9-71).

marriage in Brahma form. The object of the last verse according to Kulluka Bhatta is to show that a Hindu marriage is indissoluble from the statements that a girl can be given in marriage once only and that there could be no second marriage of virgin (*Kanyādāna*) in the case of a widow whether deflowered or not according to the sacramental theory of marriage. The sage Yājñavalkya on the other hand has recognised the remarriage of widows whether virgins or otherwise. Thus he says: 'A virgin or one who has not been known by a man (*Akshatā*) and a non-virgin who has been known (*Kshatā*) by a person, when purified again by performing the purificatory rites are called *Punarbhū* (i. e. remarried women).¹ The Mitākshara commenting on the above verse observes that remarried widows are of two kinds viz, a virgin widow who is not known by her husband and a widow known by her previous husband. Both these are impure, the latter by connection with her former husband while the former by the purification ceremony (*Sanskāra*) which she had to undergo at the time of her remarriage which presupposes her previous impure condition. Yājñavalkya has again described remarried woman (*Punarbhū*) along with wanton woman (*Svarinī*) who having abandoned her husband seeks another of her own choice out of lust.² Nārada too has similarly classed remarried women with wanton women. According to Nārada "Besides the lawful wives seven other sorts of wives are mentioned in the order who have previously been enjoyed by another man. Among these the *Punarbhū* or the twice-married women are of three kinds, while *Svarinī* or wanton women are of four kinds.³ In his opinion even a virgin widow who is not deflowered is disgraced by the act of joining the bride and bridegroom's hands on the occasion of her first marriage and she is required to have the marriage ceremony performed once more as a purification at the time of remarriage.⁴ The question that arises for our consideration next is whether a widow who had already begotten children by her deceased former husband is competent to marry a second time and if so what was the place assigned to her? There is no specific sanction for remarriage of such a woman at least so far as Manu and Yājñavalkya are concerned but she would come under one of four classes of wanton women

1. (Y. S. 1-67). 2. (Y. S. 1-67). 3. (N. S. 12-45). 4. (N. S. 12-46).

(Swairinī) as enumerated by Nārada. This question has been exhaustively dealt with by Yasodhara in his commentary known as Jayamangalā on the Kūma Sūtras of Vatsyayana.¹ The commentator observes "Remarried women are of 2 kinds viz., those known by a person (*Aśhata yoni*) and those not so known (*Akshata yoni*). Of these two classes, the latter is included in the virgin class (*Kanyā*) only, which can be purified by the ceremony of remarriage as laid down for her, while, as regards the former, there is no ceremony of purification by second marriage prescribed for her. She could be accepted only as a wife by a second husband but not given in marriage. She is called by the people an *Icaruddhā* woman or a concubine who is in the exclusive keeping of a person as his mistress and who is governed by the peculiar rules as laid down for her in Hindu law, "her right to maintenance being conditional upon her continued chastity." The commentator then cites a passage from Vasistha as an authority in support of his above view and states that there are 6 kinds of virgins mentioned in the above text who are not deflowered (*Aśhata yoni*) and who could be married a second time (*Punarbhū*). But there is another class of women who are deflowered (*Aśhata yoni*) and who have also begotten offspring (*Prasūta*). As regards such women, Vatsyayana has stated one view known as the Gonnardiya view which says that the widow who has lost her husband and who on account of want of control over her senses and being overcome by lust, makes a second husband endowed with all the necessary qualifications of a lover is called a remarried woman (*Punarbhū*). It appears that Mann and Yajñavalkya in recognising the ceremony of remarriage for widows as a purification in the circumstances mentioned by them as pointed out above seem to have made only a concession to the ordinary frailty of the woman as an effective check and safeguard against immorality.

It may be mentioned here that certain other Smṛitis are relied on by certain reformers as supporting remarriage of widows in the circumstances mentioned therein as opposed to Mann who disfavours widow-remarriage generally. But this construction does not seem to be correct. Thus Nārada says "There are 5 cases in which a woman may take another husband, viz. when her former

husband is lost, or dead, when he has become a religious ascetic, when he is impotent, and when he has been expelled from caste."¹ Now it may be stated that the above verse appears just after the verse relating to Niyoga and it allows a woman to practice Niyoga in the circumstances mentioned therein, but it does not support remarriage of widows looking to the context. Construing the above verse in light of the verses immediately succeeding it, it seems it would refer to the course of action that a woman whose husband has gone abroad on business or for other purposes after marriage but has not returned home, has to adopt on such occasions. Such a woman is enjoined by Nārada to wait for her husband for a certain number of years on the expiry of which she is asked to betake herself to another person as her master and serve under him for earning her means of livelihood.² Nārada says that "no offence is imputed to a woman if she goes to live with another man after the fixed period has elapsed" The word 'Pati' here does not mean second husband as construed by some but it only means one who protects and maintains the woman as interpreted by the great Mīmāṃsaka Medhātithi in his commentary on Manu.³ Or the verse might be construed as referring to Niyoga as stated above But Niyoga was condemned by Manu and Bṛhaspati as a beastly act. Nor is it sanctioned by Pārāśara for the present age of Kali⁴ as it is also rejected by Bṛhaspati⁵ and in the Puranas.⁶ The very same verse that is given in Nārada allowing a woman to have recourse to another person in the five cases mentioned by him is bodily repeated in Pārāśara⁷ But it does not there refer to Niyoga the latter being rejected by Pārāśara. From this it is argued by some that the above verse in Pārāśara applies to remarriage of women in the 5 cases mentioned therein including that of a widow but this does not seem to be a correct mode of interpretation being opposed to the Vedic theory of marriage which consists of a gift of Virgin girls (Kanyādāna) only accompanied by Vedic Mantras as explained by Manu who has forbidden the second gift of a woman in marriage after she was once married in her virgin state according to the Vedic formulae before the holy fire⁸ Nandapandita in his commentary on Pārāśara known as *Vidvan Manoharā* has interpreted the above verse in Pārāśara to mean that it applies to cases of Virgin girls

1. (N. S. 12-97). 2 (N S 12-98 to 101). 3. (9-76). 4. (P. S. 4-24).
5. (B. S. 24-12 to 14, 25-35, 41). 6. (V. P, A. P). 7. (P. S. 4-30) 8. (9-71).

only who are only promised in marriage but whose marriage is not actually completed by Vedic Mantras and it provides for the remarriage of such girls with another person in the five cases mentioned above viz., when the betrothed husband is lost dead, has become an ascetic, has been found to be impotent, or has fallen to the state of a sinner but it does not provide for the remarriage of a widow whose marriage was completed once according to the Vedic rites in her virgin state. The interpretation of Mādhava in his commentary on the above verse to the effect that Parīkṣara has sanctioned widow remarriage in the 5 cases mentioned by him for other times than the age of Kālī is clearly wrong as Parīkṣara Smṛti is specially meant for the Kālī age and all the rules therein laid down would therefore apply to the Kālī age. It would thus be seen from the above discussion that widow remarriage did not find much favour with the law givers. Even Manu who has allowed remarriage of widows in the 2 cases mentioned by him has expressed his positive disapproval of it by censuring the husband of a remarried woman (*Parapūrvā Patī*) as unfit to be invited to dinner as a Brāhmana at the Śrāddha ceremony.¹ Manu has also censured the son begotten on a remarried woman as inferior to a lawful son and not entitled to right of inheritance to the property left by his father which descends to the lawful son,² though he puts the son begotten on a woman by Niyoga in a higher category and treats him in a rank with lawful sons born of the first marriage of virgin girls and adopted sons and as such entitled to inheritance to the property of his deceased father. The above question however was set at rest finally by the Hindu widow Remarriage Act XV of 1856 and remarriages of Hindu widows whether virgins or otherwise were since legalised subject however to the restriction that the remarried widow forfeits all rights of inheritance to the property of her deceased husband. Though widow remarriages are allowed in certain castes on the ground of long established custom, they are still looked upon with much disfavour and very few persons belonging to the high caste Hindus even to-day seem inclined to favour widow remarriage notwithstanding the special facility for the same afforded by the Legislative enactment referred to above.

1 (8-166). 2. (9-160).

(viii) Divorce Repugnant to the Sacramental theory of Marriage.

I have already shown above that according to the Vedic theory, marriage not being a contract but a religious Sacrament which creates a permanent tie between the married parties, it is indissoluble by its very nature. Even if through ignorance a man marries a girl belonging to his own family (Sagotra) against the express injunction of law he cannot dissolve the marriage but he is enjoined by the law-givers to maintain her for life and look upon her as a mother. Mr. Jolly in this connection observes in his translation of the Nārada Smṛiti that "a betrothal being dissoluble on the discovery of a blemish in either party (both according to Yāgnavalkya and Nārada), it follows that the act of joining the bride and bridegroom's hands i.e. the ceremony of marriage must be indissoluble." Nārada does not place betrothal on a par with the ceremony of marriage which is indissoluble for life as remarked by Mr. Jolly.¹

Manu has laid down the rule that "neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband, such we know the law to be which the Lord of creatures (Prajāpati) made of old"². This would clearly show that according to Manu the marriage tie being Sacramental is indissoluble. But Manu recognises separate staying of husband and wife in certain circumstances, which however does not mean divorce as the husband is enjoined to maintain his wife even on such separation. Thus Manu says: "Though a man may have accepted a damsel in due form, he may not stay with her if she is blemished, diseased or deflowered and if she has been given with fraud"³. For one year let a husband bear with a wife who hates him, but after that period let him deprive her of her property and cease to cohabit with her⁴. The commentators however add that she must be maintained. Manu further says that a woman who shows disrespect to her husband, who is addicted to some vice, (e.g. gambling,) or is a drunkard etc. shall be deserted for 3 months and be deprived of her ornaments and furniture.⁵

1. (See Jolly S. B. E. Vol. 33, P. 165). 2. (9-46). 3. (9-72). 4. (9-77).
5. (9-78)

Manu similarly gives the wife the right to stay separate from her husband in certain circumstances but this also does not mean divorce as she is not thereby deprived of her other rights to property. Thus it is stated 'She who shows aversion towards a mad or outcaste husband, a eunuch, one destitute of manly strength or one afflicted with certain incurable diseases shall neither be cast off nor be deprived of her property.'

(ix) Polygamy inconsistent with the Vedic ideal of Marriage

It seems that in the time of the Rig Veda it was the usual practice to marry one wife only and the custom of marrying many wives does not seem to have been favoured in those times but rather disapproved as would appear from the following verse in the Rig Veda "The ribs that compass me give pain and trouble me like rival wives" (spoken by a man fallen in a well).¹ Mr Ragozin, in "Vedic India" has remarked that it is self-evident that polygamy could not have been common in a society which possessed the high ideal of marriage as set out in the marriage hymn of the Rig Veda. This opinion is further supported by repeated allusions to monogamy in several other hymns.² The Vedic theory of marriage which creates a permanent and indissoluble tie between the husband and the wife not only for this life but even for the next life would not support the second marriage of a husband with another wife during the lifetime of his first wife. Such polygamous marriages are repugnant to the high ideal of marriage as set out in the Rig Veda. However the custom of polygamy seems to have been more definitely established since the time of the Brāhmanas and there has been a considerable change in the Hindu law since then and second marriage with another wife while one wife is alive has been held to be valid on the ground of usage in several cases as observed by Abbe Dubois thus. "Polygamy was tolerated among persons of high rank though even among them it was looked upon as an infraction of law and custom and in fact an abuse." One Text of Manu seems to indicate that there was a time when second marriage was only allowed to a man

1. (0-70). 2. (R. V 10-33-2 1-105-8). 3. (R V 1-105-2, 1-124-7, 4-3-2, 10-11-5).

after the death of his former wife, to enable him to again kindle the sacred fires (*Agni Ādhāna*).¹ Another set of texts lays down special grounds which justify a husband in taking a second wife (e.g. if she is immoral, disobedient, barren, etc.). Except for such causes it appears she could not be superseded without her consent.² Other passages provide for a plurality of wives³ even of different castes without any restriction. Mr. Mayne in this connection in his Hindu law observes. "A peculiar sanctity however seems to have been attributed to the first marriage as being that which was contracted from a sense of duty and not merely for personal gratification. The first married wife has precedence over the others and her first born son over his half brothers". "That son alone on whom he throws his debt and through whom he obtains immortality, is begotten for the fulfilment of the law, all the rest they consider the offspring of desire"⁴ Mr. Mayne further remarks "It is probable that originally the secondary wives were considered as merely a superior class of concubines like the handmaids of the Jewish patriarchs." It is however now quite settled in the Courts of British India that a Hindu is absolutely without restriction as to the number of his wives and he may marry again without his wife's consent or without any justification except his own wish. But in spite of this, the strict ideal as laid down in the Rig Veda has been maintained even now in the Vādnagrā Nāgar caste and the usage of the said caste forbids a husband from contracting a second marriage during the lifetime of his first wife.⁵ The incident in Rāmāyana of the banishment of Rāma to the forest and his wanderings there with his wife Sītā brought about as the result of intrigues in the harem of Rāma's father King Dasharatha who had married several wives is sufficient to point out the evils of polygamy.

(x) Polyandry uncommon among the Āryan Hindus.

Polyandry in its lowest form as authorising the union of women with a plurality of husbands of different families could not have been common among the Āryan Hindus as the system of kinship through females such as exists among certain tribes of the

1. (5-168). 2. (9-80, 81). 3. (3-12, 9-85 to 87). 4. (3-12, 14; 9-86, 107, 122 to 125). 5. (2 Bor. 524, 572).

West coast of India and Assam where inheritance goes through the female was alien to the Ārya society. In the Ārya Hindus, kinship is traced through males strictly in accordance with custom which is based on their religious system, the first principle of which was the practice of worshipping deceased male ancestors to the remotest degree.¹ According to Mr Mayne therefore at the earliest times of which we have any evidence, polyandry had become very rare and had fallen into complete discredit even where it existed. There is however one example in *Mahabharata* of Draupadi who was won at an orchard match by Arjuna one of the five Pāndava princes and then became the wife of all. This is the only definite instance in which an Ārya woman is recorded to have become the legal permanent wife of several men. However, the very description of the transaction represents it as one which was opposed to public opinion and which was rather justified by remote tradition than by existing practice. The account given in the *Mahabharata* runs as follows: "The father of Draupadi is represented as shocked at the proposal of the princes to marry his daughter. He says: "You who know the law must not commit an unlawful act which is contrary to usage and the Vedas." Yudhishthira one of the five Pāndava princes replies: "The Law O king is subtle. We do not know its way. We follow the path which has been trodden by our ancestors in succession." It is also to be remembered as Mr Mayne puts it that the Pāndava princes were Kshatriyas to whom greater license was allowed in their dealings with the sex and for whom the loosest forms of marriage were sanctioned.² From a passage in the *Rāmāyana* cited by Wheeler³ it appears that even the great Rāvana on seeing the two brothers Rama and Lakshmana in the forest of Dandakā with one woman Sītā and believing them to be her husbands, became enraged, as he seems to have looked upon polyandry with the same abhorrence as Draupadi's father." Polyandry however was in existence among certain aboriginal hill tribes as the Todas of Nilgiris, the Tiyars of Malabar and Travankore and the low-caste Malayalis of Cochin. According to custom as prevailing in those tribes the wife is the property of all the brothers

1. (3-81 to 83 91 122 to 125 180 193 to 231 282 to 284).

2. (3-26) 3. (Wheeler *Hist. of India* 2-241).

and lives in their home. "Polyandry exists as an institution among certain classes in Malābar and we see every day the four or five chosen husbands among these classes celebrating their polyandrous marriage openly according to their caste rules."¹ This custom was however never prevalent among the Āryan Hindus and according to the lawgivers a woman could never have more than one husband at a time.

(xi) Sale of a girl denounced by the lawgivers.

Manu has interdicted the sale of girls. Hence he says "Let no father, who knows the law receive a gratuity (*Shulka*) however small for giving his daughter in marriage since the man who through avarice takes a gratuity for that purpose is a seller of his offspring"² "Even a Sūdra should not receive a gratuity (*shulka*) for giving his daughter in marriage since the man who takes a gratuity is a seller of his daughter secretly."³ He further says that "no instances of secret sale of daughters have been known to have taken place even in former ages.⁴ But when money or goods are given to damsels whose kinsmen receive them not for their own use it is no sale. It is merely a token of Courtesy and affection to the brides."⁵

(7) The Sacred laws and traditions of the Āryans.

(i) Twofold nature of the Āryan religion as taught in the Dharmashāstras.

According to the Vedic theory the main purpose of a man's life was fourfold viz Dharma or righteous conduct, Artha or worldly prosperity, Kāma or sensual desire, and Moksha or spiritual emancipation. Of the above four objects Dharma or righteous conduct is the first and it is the most important aim of life. The word Dharma is generally used in a loose sense and it means conduct, duty, righteousness, spiritual merit, law, or religion. But in the Dharmashāstras it is used in the sense of righteous conduct or duty as regulated by law or custom. The word Dharma is derived from the root Dhru, i.e. to hold and it means that by which a man is held and saved from a fall i.e. virtue or righteousness. In short Dharma means good conduct laid down as one's duty in the sacred law

1. (Malabar marriage Report-by O. C Menon P. 103). 2 (3-51).

3. (9-98). 4. (9-100) 5 (3-54).

or by custom. Success in achieving the three other objects of life, Artha, Kama, and Moksha depended entirely on a scrupulous observance of Dharma or moral and religious duty. The acquisition of wealth and material prosperity, fulfilment of sensual desire and spiritual emancipation or perfect freedom demanded an imperative observance of the commandments of duty laid down for a man as the sacred law in the Dharmashastras or by custom. Thus Manu says 'The whole Veda is the first source of the sacred law'¹ 'Whatever law has been ordained for any person by Manu that has been fully declared in the Veda for that sage was omniscient'² The word Dharma in a wide sense means religion and it includes all the above four objects of life viz. righteous conduct, prosperity, sensual desire, and emancipation of which the first three constitute the religion of duty or *Paurusa Dharma* while the last constitutes the religion of renunciation (*Anitgya*) and knowledge (*Jnana*) or *Varita Dharma*. The religion as taught in the Dharmashastras is thus twofold viz., religion of duty (Dharma) or conduct and religion of renunciation and knowledge, that maintains order in the Universe. Thus Manu says "Some declare that the supreme good consists in the acquisition of religious merit (Dharma) and wealth others place it in gratification of desire and the acquisition of wealth, others in the acquisition of spiritual merit alone while others say that the acquisition of wealth alone is the chief good here but the correct decision is that it consists of the aggregate of these three"³ Manu at first defines the sacred law and religion as that which is followed by men learned in the Veda and assented to in their hearts by the virtuous, who are ever exempt from hatred and inordinate affection⁴. Jaimini the author of the Purva Mimamsa defines the sacred law as an object which is distinguished by a command or an injunction⁵. This religion has been practised by the Āryas of all castes and religious orders (Varnāshrama) since the time of the Vedas of hoary antiquity down to the present times. The religion of duty and conduct leads to worldly prosperity as also to happiness in the higher world which is acquired as the fruit of an unseen religious merit (*Apūrva*) while the religion of renunciation and knowledge leads to liberation and freedom from the rounds of rebirths in this world. Manu has

1 (2-6) 2. (2-7) 3 (2-224) 4 (2-1). 5 (J & 1-1-2)

dealt with the religion of duty and conduct in Chapters 2 to 11 of his law code while he has dealt with the religion of knowledge in Chapters 1 and 12. Though the religion of duty and conduct which is enjoined on the several castes and religious orders primarily conduces to worldly prosperity and a station in the heavenly region of the Devas (gods) after death, yet it also subserves the purpose of securing the supreme bliss of emancipation indirectly through knowledge generated by means of good conduct and purity of mind (*Sattvashuddhi*). The religion of renunciation and knowledge relates more to theory and problems of abstruse metaphysics and philosophy rather than to practice and practical problems of life and human conduct which are dealt with principally in the *Dharmashāstras*.

(ii) Traditional mode (*Paramparā*) of handing down sacred Precepts and customs about good conduct (*sadāchāra*).

The *Dharmashāstras* which are based on the Vedas, mainly treat of rules of injunction and prohibition regulating human conduct in relation to the social, moral, and religious spheres of a man's life. Leading a high moral life (*Sadāchāra*) and observance of rules relating to the four castes and orders of life (*Varnāshrama Dharma*) and those relating to purity regulating ablutions, touch, food, drink, marriage, penances, expiations against defilement and so forth marked out and distinguished the *Āryans* from the *Un-Āryans* who were known for their unclean and filthy habits, sinful acts and an impulsive and animal life seeking after sensual gratification even at the cost of their fellow brethren, members of the same society who were treated by them with cruelty¹. The *Un-Āryans* were the uncultured and illiterate aborigines of the land and they formed a separate class by themselves. The *Āryans* were distinguished from the *Un-Āryans* by their scrupulous observance of the rules and regulations relating to the four castes (*chāturvarna*) and to conduct as laid down for them in the *Dharma Shāstras*. Man has by nature a beastly nature being governed more by impulses and animal instincts than by reason seeking after sensual pleasures at the cost of others which required to be controlled by proper and well regulated religious restraints. The law gives therefore knowing

this inherent weakness in human nature framed many rules and regulations governing man's conduct in almost all the spheres of daily life obliging him to follow the same scrupulously as his most pious and sacred duty, with religious penalties for an infraction of the said rules. They were evidently actuated with a desire to raise man to the level of god by leading a pure and well-disciplined life. If you take away from Hindu religion the rules and regulations relating to conduct, purity, and discipline laid down by the wise lawgivers as suggested by certain present-day social reformers you would destroy the most vital ingredient in the Hindu religion which distinguishes the Āryans from the Un-Āryans. Maan has laid down that the rule of conduct (*Āchāra*) constitutes transcendental law and religion whether it be taught in the revealed texts or in the sacred tradition which a man shall accept and follow as his standard of life.¹ By good conduct (*Sādāchāra*) he means the conduct of virtuous men and of the four castes as observed by custom which is handed down by tradition in regular succession (*Paramparā*) since time immemorial.² Traditions were handed down by oral communications either from teacher to pupil, father to son, ancestors to descendants or from virtuous men to their followers from generation to generation in unbroken succession. Manu says "Through virtuous conduct (*Āchāra*), one obtains long life, desirable offspring and imperishable wealth. Let him untired follow the conduct of virtuous men (*sādāchāra*) connected with his occupations, which has been fully declared in the revealed texts and in the sacred tradition (*Smṛiti*) and is the root of the sacred Law".³ A man of bad conduct (*Durāchāra*) is blamed among people; he constantly suffers misfortunes, is afflicted with diseases and is short-lived.⁴ A man who follows the conduct of the virtuous (*sādāchāra*), has faith and is free from care, lives a hundred years though he is entirely destitute of auspicious marks.⁵ Let him carefully avoid all undertakings the success of which depends on others, but let him eagerly pursue that the accomplishment of which depends on himself.⁶ Maan exhorts all Āryans to make self-determination as their principle of life and follow preferably the high ideals of culture and civilisation as laid down in the ancient Āryan traditions and practices of their virtuous predecessors and illustrious

sages and saints of hoary antiquity rather than imitate blindly the ideals of persons belonging to other races and religions which are least suited to the peculiar conditions as prevailing in India. Manu has rightly said: "Every thing that depends on others gives pain, while every thing that depends on oneself gives pleasure; know that this is the short definition of pleasure and pain."¹

(iii) Sources of the sacred laws of the Āryans.

As regards the sources of law, Manu says "The whole Veda (*S'ruti*) is the first source of the sacred law, next the *Smṛiti* (tradition) and the virtuous conduct (*Sadāchāra*) of those who know the Veda as also the customs, (*Achāra*) of holy men and finally, self-satisfaction (*Ātmastuti*)."² As explained by the commentator Medhātithi, the self-satisfaction i.e. of the virtuous is the rule for cases not to be settled by any of the other authorities or for cases where an option is permitted "But a learned man after fully scrutinising all this, with the eye of knowledge should in accordance with the authority of the revealed texts be intent on the performance of his duties (*Swadharma*)."³ "Every twice born man who relying on the institutes of dialectics treats with contempt these two sources of the law must be cast out by the virtuous as an atheist and a scorner of the Vedas."⁴ "The Veda, the sacred tradition, the customs of virtuous men and self satisfaction, they declare to be visibly the four-fold means of defining the sacred law."⁵ "The knowledge of the sacred law is prescribed for those who are not given to the acquisition of wealth and to the gratification of their desire; to those who seek the knowledge of the sacred law, the supreme authority is the revelation (*S'ruti*)."⁶ Gotama similarly lays down that "the administration of justice shall be regulated by the Veda, the institutes of the sacred law, the *Angas* and the *Purāṇa*."⁷ Thus the two great categories of primeval authority are the *S'ruti* (Revelation) and the *Smṛiti* (Tradition)

The *S'ruti* (Revelation)

The *S'ruti* is that which was perceived in a revelation and includes the four Vedas consisting of the *Samhitās*, *Brāhmanas* and

1. (4-16.0) 2 (2-6) 3 (2-8). 4. (2-11). 5 (2-12). 6 (2-13).
7. (G D. S 11-19).

the Upanishads. It was considered to be of supreme authority with all its Angas or Appendages¹

Smṛiti (Tradition)

The Smṛiti is a recollection handed down traditionally by the sages of antiquity. "For that man who obeys the law prescribed in the revealed texts and in the sacred tradition, gains fame in this world and after death unsurpassable bliss." "By Śruti (revelation) is meant the Veda and by Smṛiti (tradition) the institutes of the sacred law. These two must not be called into question in any matter, since from them the sacred law shone forth."² The Śruti is of divine origin while the Smṛiti is of human origin. The Śruti contains very little of secular law though its statements of facts are occasionally referred to as conclusive evidence of a legal usage. "Rules of conduct as distinct from instances of conduct" as Mr Mayne puts it are for the most part embodied in the Smṛiti.³ The Puranas are reckoned as supplement to the scriptures and as such they constitute the fifth Veda.⁴ They are considered as valid authorities like the Veda, Sacred Law and the Angas.⁵

Rules of Interpretation of the Sacred Texts.

(1) When the Śruti and Smṛiti conflict the Smṛiti must give way to the Śruti.⁶ (2) When two sacred texts (Śruti) are conflicting both are held to be valid, for both are pronounced by the wise to be valid law.⁷ (3) Similarly where two Smṛitis conflict an option (Vikalpa) is permitted and either may be followed, at pleasure.⁸ Jaimini in the Purva Mīmāṃsā lays down the following rules on the subject. (4) Smṛitis are authorities because they have the support of the Veda behind them.⁹ If we do not find the express Vedic text to support the Smṛiti we must presume that there was a Vedic text in its support which is lost. But what are we to do when the Smṛiti text is in contradiction with the express Vedic text? To which Jaimini replies (5) That when the Smṛiti conflicts with an express Vedic text, the Smṛiti is to be rejected, because the presumption for its validity arises when there is no such contradiction.¹⁰

1. (2-13 G D S. 1-1 8-5) 2. (2-9 10). 3. (Ch. Up. 7-1-2 G D S. 8-6).
4. (G D S. 8-6 11-10) 5. (2-13) 6. (2-14). 7. (G D S. 1-4) 8. (J S. 1-3-2).
9. (J S. 1-3-3)

Practices of good men and customs. (Āchāra)

Manu next mentions good conduct (Sadāchāra) as a source of law. He says "the custom handed down traditionally in regular succession (Paṁparayā) since time immemorial among the four chief castes (Varna) and the mixed races (Antarāla) of that country is called the conduct of virtuous men (Sadāchāra)."¹ This would exclude new customs of recent growth from having a binding legal authority.

Reason (Tarka)

The last source of authority for the sacred law recognised by Manu is self-satisfaction (Ātma-tushtī) or what is agreeable to the reason of the virtuous. Medhātithi explains it to be the self-satisfaction of the virtuous which is to be applied when an option is permitted, while Nārāyana interprets it to mean that the rule applies to cases which are not to be settled by any of the other authorities. What Manu seems to mean by self-satisfaction as an authority in cases not covered by the other authorities is that it is in consonance with the reason of the virtuous, thus recognising reason as an important element in determining what is right course of action to be followed by a man in cases of doubt This construction is further supported by another passage in Manu Smṛiti which says. " Let him adopt that course of action which is deemed right by pure reason (i.e. which is free from any bias or prejudice)."² He further says " He alone and no other man knows the sacred law who explores the utterances of the sages and the body of the laws by modes of reasoning not repugnant to the Veda lore"³ by which he means the rules of reasoning laid down by Jaimini in Pūrva-Mimāṁsā Manu of course like a true Vaidic refuses to recognise mere dry dialectical reasoning of persons who refused to believe in the supreme authority of the Scriptures and the word of God and who are therefore called by him as atheists and who must be cast out according to him ⁴

(iv) Good conduct (Āchāra) and ancient usages as transcendent law.

Manu has stated that " The sages who saw that the sacred law is grounded on the rule of conduct have taken good conduct

1. (2-18). 2. (6-46) 3 (12-106). 4 (2-11).

(Āchāra) to be the most excellent root of all authority "1 The rule of conduct (Āchāra) is transcendent law, whether it be taught in the revealed texts (Śruti) or in the sacred tradition (Smṛiti); hence a twice-born man who presides in regard for himself should be always careful to follow it "2 "A Brahmana who departs from the rule of conduct does not reap the fruit of the Veda but he who duly follows it will obtain the full reward "3 The rule of good conduct mentioned in the preceding verses comprises the numerous usages prescribed partly in the Veda and partly in the Dharma Śāstras. Manu further says "A king who knows the revealed law, must inquire into the particular laws of castes (Jāti) of districts, of guilds and of families (Kulachāra) and thus settle the particular law of each "4 "What may have been practised by the virtuous and by such twice-born men as are devoted to the law, that the king shall establish as law if it be not opposed to the customs of countries (Dehā) families (Kula) and castes (Jāti) "5 Medhātithi interprets the above verse to mean that "What has been practised by the virtuous and by the twice-born that the king shall establish as law if it is not opposed to texts of Śruti and Smṛiti " The Mahābhārata also says that the sacred law is derived from rules of conduct (Āchāra Prabhavo Dharmakha) "6

Hindu Law mostly consisting of immemorial customs.

Mr. Mayne in his Hindu law has expressed the opinion that "Hindu Law is based upon immemorial customs which existed prior to and independent of Brahmanism. That when the Āryans penetrated into India they found there a number of usages either the same as or not wholly unlike their own. That they accepted these with or without modifications rejecting only those which were incapable of being assimilated such as polyandry, incestuous marriages and the like. That the latter lived on a merely local life while the former became incorporated among the customs of the ruling race." In the opinion of Mr. Mayne the most distinctive features of the Hindu Law viz. the undivided family system, the order of succession and the practice of adoption existed independently of Brahmanism which had nothing whatever to do with the early history of these

1. (1-110). 2. (1-108) 3. (1-109) 4. (8-41). 5. (8-46).
6. (M. D. Ann. 104-157).

branches of the law and the religious element was introduced only subsequently.

**Neutrality of the Āryans towards the conquered races
and non-interference with their usages.**

Mr. Mayne pays a glowing tribute to the Āryans for their noble spirit of tolerance and neutrality and their non-coercive attitude towards the aboriginal native inhabitants of India such as the Dravidians of Southern India who were allowed to observe their ancient usages without any hindrance or obstruction whatever. Thus he observes "We know the tenacity with which Eastern races cling to their customs unaffected by the example of those who live near them. We have no reason to suppose that the Āryans in India ever attempted to force their usages upon the conquered races × × The Brāhmin treatises themselves negative any such idea. There is not an atom of dogmatism or controversy among the old Sūtra writers. They appear to be simply recording the usages they observe and occasionally stop to remark that the practice of some districts or the opinions of other persons are different."¹

**Manu averse to disturb the existing customs of the
different classes of people.**

Mr. Mayne further observes "The greater part of Manu is exclusively addressed to Brāhmins, but he takes pains to point out that the laws and customs of districts, classes, and even of families ought to be observed.² Example and influence coupled with the general progress of society have largely modified ancient usages but a wholesale substitution of one set of usages for another appears to be equally opposed to philosophy and to facts" The above remarks of an eminent Jurist and Lawyer ought to be an eye-opener to the modern reformers of India who want to force their views of social and religious reform into Hindu religion through the medium of legislation in purely religious matters upon a large bulk of the reticent orthodox Hindus who honestly follow old practices and customs in matters affecting their sacred religion as a matter of conscience and faith and who are opposed tooth and nail to certain proposed reforms which are sought to be forced upon them through the medium of legislation.

1. (A. D. S. 2-6-14-6 to 9, G. D. S. 28-26, 40). 2. (M. S. 8-41, 46).

Paramount Duty of the Sovereign to preserve usages of the subject people.

As regards the preservation of social and religious usages of the subject people on the part of the Sovereign authority, Yajñaalkya says: "Of a newly subjugated territory the monarch shall preserve the social and religious usages and also the judicial system and the state of classes as they already obtained"¹

Legal force of custom

The fullest effect is given to custom both by our courts and by legislature. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has observed in the *Ramnād Case* 'Under the Hindu system of law, clear proof of usage will outweigh the written texts of law'² Mr Mayne has also observed in this connection 'And all the recent Acts which provide for the administration of the law dictate a similar reference to usage, unless it is contrary to justice equity and good conscience or has been actually declared to be void'³

Evidence of Custom

Next as regards the evidence of custom, the Privy Council has observed as follows. "Their Lordships are fully sensible of the importance and justice of giving effect to long established usages existing in particular districts and families in India but it is of the essence of special usages modifying the ordinary law of succession that they should be ancient and invariable and it is further essential that they should be established to be so by clear and unambiguous evidence"⁴ The custom must also be definite, so that its application in any given instance may be clear, certain and reasonable. It may also be remarked here that a custom cannot be created by agreement as observed by their Lordships of the Privy Council 'A mere agreement among certain persons to adopt a particular rule cannot create a new custom binding on others whatever its effect may be upon themselves.'⁵ Lastly customs which are immoral (e.g. prostitution) or contrary to public policy will neither be enforced nor

1 (Y S. 1-343) 2. (*Collector of Madura vs. Mootoo Ramalinga* 12 M. L. A. 436).
3. (*Bombay Reg. IV of 1827 s. 26 Act. II of 1864 s. 15*). 4. (*Ramalakshmi vs. Shiva Natha*, known as the *Oorcad case* 14 M. L. A. 570, 585). 5 (*Mynna Boye vs. Ootaram* 8 M. L. A. 420).

sanctioned.¹ Thus it has been held by the Bombay High. Court that caste customs authorising a woman to abandon her husband and marry again without his consent was void for immorality.²

(v) Assembly of Learned Brāhmans (Parishad) competent to decide doubtful points of Sacred Law

“If it be asked how it should be with respect to points of sacred law which have not been specifically decided, the answer is that which Brāhmans who are shistas (learned) propound shall doubtless have legal force.”³ “Those Brāhmans must be considered as (Shistas) learned who in accordance with the sacred law have studied the Veda together with its appendages (i.e., the Angas, the Purāṇas (ancient narratives and mythologies) Itihāsas (histories) and so forth) and are able to adduce proofs perceptible by the senses from the revealed texts.”⁴ “Whatever an assembly consisting either of at least ten or of at least three persons who follow their prescribed occupations declare to be the law, the legal force of that one must not dispute.”⁵ “Three persons who each know one of the three principal Vedas, a logician, a Mimāṃsaka, one who knows the Nirukta (i.e. Vedic etymology), one who recites the institute of the sacred law, and three men belonging to the first three orders of life (i.e. a student, a house-holder and a hermit) shall constitute a legal assembly consisting of at least ten members.”⁶ “One who knows the Rig Veda, one the Yajur Veda, and one the Sāma Veda shall be known to form an assembly consisting of at least three members and competent to decide doubtful points of law.”⁷ “Even that which one Brāhman versed in the Vedas declares to be the sacred law must be considered to have supreme legal force but not that which is proclaimed by myriads of ignorant men.”⁸ “Even if thousands of ignorant Brāhmans who have not fulfilled their sacred duties and who are unacquainted with the Vedas and subsist only by name of their caste, they cannot form an assembly for settling the sacred law.”⁹ One will see from the above that only persons well-versed in the sacred lore and the Shāstras and who were free from all sectarian bias were competent to be members of the legal Assembly (Parishad) to decide doubtful points of law and make.

1 (M S 8-46). 2 (Uji vs. Hathi 7 B H C R. (A C. I) 133) 3. (12-108)
4 (12-109) 5. (12-110) 6. (12-111) 7 (12-112). 8. (12-113). 9. (12-114).

laws on religious questions, which were acceptable to the Āryans. The constitution of the legal assembly of the wise to administer law as stated above presents a strange contrast to the present day Legislative Assembly and Legislative Councils consisting of persons belonging to heterogeneous races religions and cultures and some of whom even though outwardly professing the Hindu religion have not even the elementary knowledge of the sacred laws and customs of the Āryans. One can very well judge for himself whether such persons are competent to make laws affecting the religious questions of the Hindus.

(vi) Different sets of duties for different ages.

One set of duties is prescribed for men in Kṛita age different ones in the Tretā and in the Dvāpara and again another set in the Kali, in proportion as these ages decrease in length.¹ In the Kṛita age the chief virtue is declared to be the performance of austerity (Tapa), in the Tretā divine knowledge (Jñāna), in the Dvāpara the performance of sacrifice (Yajna) and in the Kali liberality (Dāna).² The sage Pārāśara also lays down the same rule.³ He further says, "The Code of Manu was the authorized Code in the Satya Yuga, the Code of Gotama in the Tretā, the Code of Sankha and Lakṣṇa in the Dvāpara and the Code of Pārāśara in the age of Kali."⁴ In the Satya Yuga one should abandon the country in order to avoid the company of a sinner, in the Tretā the village in which he lives, in the Dvāpara the family he belongs to and the sinner himself in the Kali Yuga.⁵ Sinful is the conversation with a sinner in the Satya Yuga, his very sight in the Tretā and eating his boiled rice in the Dvāpara in the Kali age it is his not alone that degrades a man.⁶ The law givers have made a gradation in the practice of expiatory penances according to the capacity of the penitent in each Yuga. But those laid down by the holy Pārāśara should be observed in the Kali Yuga.⁷ Good conduct (Āchāra) is the true character of virtue among all castes of men. Without it a man needs must be hostilely disposed towards virtue (Dharma).⁸

1 (1-85). 2 (1-86). 3 (P. S. 1-21 22). 4 (P. S. 1-23). 5 (P. S. 1-24).
6 (P. S. 1-25). 7 (P. S. 1-33). - 8 (P. S. 1-36)

(vii) **Catholicity of Dharma Shāstras and adaption of the law to changing conditions.**

The laws laid down by the law-givers were not rigid and uniform for all ages but they were elastic so as to be adaptable to the changing conditions of the different times. Thus it is stated by Manu "One set of duties is prescribed for men in the Kṛita age, different ones in Tretā and in the Dvāpara and another set in the Kali age in proportion as those ages decrease in length.¹ In the Kṛita age, the chief virtue is declared to be the performance of austerities (Tapa), in the Tretā divine Knowledge (Jñāna), in the Dvāpara sacrifice (Yajna) and in the Kali liberality (Dāna) alone.² Bṛhaspati in this connection observes "In the ages of Kṛita, Tretā, and Dvāpara, men were imbued with devotion and sacred knowledge; in the present or Kali age, a decrease of its power has been ordained for the human race"³ The sage Pārāśara observes that "the law-givers have made a gradation in the practice of expiatory penances according to the capacity of the penitent in each age (Yuga) but those laid down by the holy Pārāśara should be observed in the Kali age"⁴ Good conduct is the true character of virtue among all castes of men; without it a man needs must be hostilely disposed towards virtue (Dharma)⁵ Pārāśara further observes; "Different are the rules of piety etc., in the succeeding ages of Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali, according to the exigencies of each age".⁶ "In the Satya Yuga one should abandon the country, in order to avoid the company of a sinner, in the Tretā the village he lives in; in the Dvāpara the family he belongs to, and the sinner himself in the Kali age."⁷ "Sinful is the conversation with a sinner in the Satya Yuga, his very sight in the Tretā, and eating his boiled rice in the Dvāpara while in the Kali age, it is his act alone that degrades a man"⁸ Pārāśara further says that "the Dhārmās for the Satya Yuga are those prescribed by Manu, for the Tretā those by Gotama, for the Dvāpara those by Sankha and Likhita and for Kali those by Pārāśara".⁹ The following explanation is given in the Vīṛmitiodaya about the above statement in Pārāśara "What is meant is that the Smṛiti of Manu does not deal in

1. (1-85).	2. (1-86).	3. (B S. 24-13)	4. (1-33).	5. (1-36).
6. (1-21).	7. (1-24).	8. (1-25)	9. (1-23).	

detail with the duties that could be performed by men endowed with such capacity for work as we find in the Kali age and hence when Pārāśara says that the Dharmas for the Kali age are those prescribed by Pārāśara, what he means is that his work is superior to the other Smṛtis by reason of the fact that what is therein laid down is such as can be performed by men of the Kali age." Dr. Gangānātha Jhō has observed in his recent book styled 'Hindu law in its sources' that "This actual adaptation of the law to changing conditions went on effectively so long as there was present in the country a temporal authority sufficiently interested and strong enough to lead to the changes its support and thereby supply the necessary driving force." This principle however it seems would apply to changes in purely secular laws needed to meet the peculiar conditions and exigencies of the times without conflict with any express Texts of the Śhrutis (Revelation) or Smṛtis (traditions) based thereon as no secular authority is competent to make any changes in the religious laws enjoined by express Texts of the Śhruti or Smṛti. The omniscient law-givers have no doubt left a wide scope for making changes in the practical spheres of human life according to the needs of the times as in matters of food, drink, touch, cleanliness, purification penances and so on without detriment to the fundamental principles of the Sanātana religion of hoary antiquity based on the Vedas (Revelation). Thus the sage Pārāśara whose Smṛti is particularly meant for the present or Kali age has made a considerable relaxation in the rigour of the rules in matters of food, drink, touch, purity and penances for distressed times and so on. Similarly the custom of Niyoga which was prevalent in the Vedic times as also the custom of animal sacrifices and flesh eating for religious purposes have fallen into disuse. It is this element of catholicity and adaptability to changing circumstances that has kept up and preserved the Hindu religion as a living religion with sufficient vitality to adapt the customs to the changed circumstances without any conflict with the fundamental and essential principles affecting the Hindu religion. There are certain texts which contain express injunctions (*Vidhi*, *Niyama*) and prohibitions (*Nishēda*) in matters affecting positive religion while there are certain other texts which do not lay down any express injunctions or prohibitions but contain mere recommen-

dations or opinions (*Ārthavāda*) only or an alternative choice of conduct (*Vikalpa*). As regards the former class of texts no secular authority is competent to make any changes so as to nullify the provisions of the express commandments and prohibitions laid down in the sacred law. But as regards the latter class of texts there is a considerable scope for making changes needed for special purposes of either the individual or the society. As a matter of fact special rules of conduct have been laid down by the different law givers for distressed times (*Āpat Kāla*) and other contingencies.

(8) Rules of conduct for the four orders of caste as constituting the Sanātan Religion (Chātur varna Dharma).

(i) What is Sanātan Religion?

The Sanātan Religion means the religion observed by the Āryan Hindus of India since the time of the Vedas of hoary antiquity and even prior thereto upto the present times without any break in continuity. It is called the eternal religion. It is based on rules and regulations of conduct as laid down in the Śruti (Revealed Texts), Smṛiti (Traditions) and ancient usages and practices as observed by the virtuous. The Sanātan religion mostly consists of regulations of conduct (*Āchāra*) and particularly those relating to the four castes (*Varnas*), viz. the Brāhmanas or the priestly class, the Kshatriyas or the warrior class, the Vaishyas or the mercantile class and the Shūdras or the servant class, the four orders of life (*Āshramas*) viz., the Brahmacharya Āshrama or the order of students, the Grihastha Āshrama or the order of householders, the Vāna-prastha Āshrama or the order of anchorites and the Sanyāsa Āshrama or the order of ascetics and certain rites and ceremonies known as the religious sacraments (*Sanskāras*).

(ii) The religious sacraments (Sanskāras).

Manu states that "He for whom the performance of the ceremonies beginning with the rite of impregnation (*Garbhādhāna*) and ending with the funeral rite (*Antyesti*) is prescribed, while sacred formulæ are being recited, is entitled to study these institutes but no other man whatever."¹ The persons meant are the males of the three Āryan Varnas. The sacraments may be performed for

women and Shūdras too, but without the recitation of Mantras ¹. He next describes the rites and ceremonies called the religious sacraments observed by persons belonging to the three higher castes viz., the Brāhmanas the Kshatriyas and the Vayshyas called the twice-born on account of their being initiated to the investiture of the sacred thread (Upanayana) "With holy rites prescribed by the Veda must the ceremony on conception and other sacraments be performed for twice-born men which sanctify the body and purify from sin in this life and after death." ² The rites and ceremonies connected with the household are 16 in number and they relate to Garbhādhāna i.e. the ceremony for securing the birth of a child, (2) Pumsavana i.e. the ceremony for securing the birth of a male child (3) Anavalambhana or Garbha-rakshana i.e. the ceremony for preventing disturbances which would endanger the embryo (4) Simantonayana i.e. the pregnancy ceremony (5) Jatakarma i.e. the ceremony for the newly born child (6) Nāma-dheya i.e. the rite of naming the child (7) Nishkramana i.e. the ceremony connected with the first leaving out of the house of the new child (8) The Annaprāshana i.e. the first feeding of the child with food (9) The Chūḍākarma i.e. tonsure of a child's head (10) Mouni or Upanayana i.e. initiation to the sacred thread, by which one is called Dwija or the twice-born (11 to 14) Veda Vrata i.e. vow for the study of the 4 Vedas (15) Samāvartana i.e. completion of the Vedic studies accompanied with a bath as a sign of Vedic graduation (Snātaka) and (16) Vivaha or marriage. ³ Certain rites and ceremonies are connected with death and they are known as Anyesi ceremonies. The above sacraments must be also performed for women and Shudras too but without the recitation of Mantras. Thus Manu says. "This whole series of ceremonies must be performed for females also in order to sanctify the body at the proper time and in the proper order but without the recitation of the sacred texts." ⁴ The nuptial ceremony is said to be the Vedic sacrament for women equal to the initiation ceremony in the case of males, serving the husband is equal to the residence in the house of the teacher and the household duties are the same as the daily worship of the sacred fire ⁵. As regards Shudras too, Manu says. "Shudras who are desirous to gain merit

and know their duty commit no sin but gain praise if they imitate the practice of virtuous men without reciting sacred texts.¹ Thus the Shūdras also are entitled to perform the above sacraments but without sacred Mantras.

(iii) Institution of the four castes (Chātur Varna).

The most important element in the Sanātana religion as observed by the large bulk of the Hindu community amounting in all to about 23 crores of people in number residing in India, is the institution of the four castes (Chātur Varna) consisting of Brāhmanas (priestly caste), Kshatriyas (military caste), Vaishyas (mercantile caste) and Shūdras (servant class). The caste is of divine institution which had its origin so far back as the R̥g Veda of hoary antiquity. In the R̥g Veda the four castes are said to have been created by the Supreme Being from the four limbs of the primeval person (Virāt Purusha) viz. the mouth, arms, thighs and feet² According to the Vedic theory there was an organic synthesis and co-ordination among the four castes as members of a living organism which could not be separated from one another as totally independent units but they were complements of one another without whose mutual co-operation the social order could not thrive and prosper. Manu has based the theory of castes (Varna) on the same principles as laid down in the R̥g Veda. According to him the institution of the four castes was founded by the Supreme Being for the good and protection of the people on the principle of division of functions and duties. Thus Manu says "But in order to protect this universe, the Supreme Being, the most resplendent one, assigned separate duties and occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet"³ The castes represented the four limbs viz. the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet of the cosmic person called Virāt Purusha which were all inter-related as members of the body of the Supreme self. Of the four castes, the Brāhmana or the priestly class is the first born having been created from the mouth of the Virāt Purusha which represented learning and intelligence. The Kshatriya or the military caste was next created in the order of beings out of the arms of the primeval person which

1. (10-127). 2. (R. V. 10-90) 3. (1-87)

represented strength needed to give protection to the Brāhmins. The Vṛishya or the mercantile caste was created out of the thighs of the primordial person which represented the conserving element which was so necessary for maintaining the different classes of the society by supplying them with resources of maintenance and wealth. The fourth class was the Shudra who was created out of the feet of the primordial person which represented the support given to the three higher castes in the form of services by manual crafts and arts and other useful works. The Brahman was the highest caste whose sole aim of life was to acquire knowledge and learning in preference to wealth which was subordinated to learning. The Brahman was enjoined to lead a well-disciplined and religious life of high purity and simplicity and observe all the religious regulations laid down for his guidance, most faithfully and with an unswerving faith without having an eye to money or worldly pleasures. In short, the Brahman was saddled with heavy responsibilities as he was entrusted with a mission to lead other castes to higher paths of rectitude and religion and that is the reason why the Brahman is said to be the highest among the four castes and not because the other castes were inferior to him. In fact all the four castes were useful members of the body corporate as limbs of a living organism whose very existence, health and growth depended upon mutual harmony and co-operation of its several members. Each member of the body corporate had to contribute useful services to the common organism for its upkeep and growth as a whole and there could be no question of ill-will on the part of one caste towards other castes. If any member of the body was allowed to wither away or be emaciated it at once reacted upon the whole organism which automatically suffered along with the diseased member. In short mutual goodwill, harmony, and co-operation was the very gist of the vedic theory of caste. The basic principle of synthetic unity of the four castes as laid down in the Rig Veda came to be forgotten in course of time and the castes began to be regarded as independent and self-subsisting bodies having no common purpose for evolution of the society as a whole nor was there any cohesive force and vitality in the caste to unite them together as a living organism. Originally there were four castes only but subsequently they multiplied and they were divided into thou-

sands of petty castes and sub-castes some of which owe their rise to intermarriages between persons of different castes and to degradation of some of them.

(iv) **Āryans (savarnas) and un-Āryans (Avarnas).**

According to Manu, the Āryans consisted of four castes only as named above and there is no fifth caste among the Āryans. Thus he says "The Brāhman, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya are the twice-born ones, but the fourth, the Sūdra, has one birth only, there is no fifth caste"¹ As distinguished from the Āryans there was another class of un-Āryans which was in existence even in the Vedic times and which also exists in the same form even to-day. The Sanskrit word for caste was '*Varna*' which means colour or appearance. The Āryans were called *Savarnas* because they had a good complexion and had castes since pre-Vedic times. They were more civilized, refined, and cultured than the un-Āryans. The un-Āryans on the other hand were called *Avarnas* or *un-Āsas* (without mouth), because they had an ugly and black complexion and they belonged to no caste.² They were also devoid of good manners, learning and civilization, and were distinguished from the Āryans by the characteristic marks of filthiness, impurity, uncleanness, cruelty and harshness as stated by Manu.³ The Āryans who entered into India for a fixed habitation brought with them culture and civilization of a very superior order as also the institution of caste (*Varna*) by which they were at once marked out and distinguished from the un-Āryans. The Āryans had the institution of four castes even in those early times with different functions assigned to them for the good and elevation of the society as a whole while the un-Āryans who were the indigenous aborigines of India and the conquered races were called in Vedic times *Dasyus*, *Dāsas* and *Nishādas* and subsequently *Panchamas* or *Avarnas* as called at present in Southern India. The un-Āryans had no fixed institution of caste as that of the Āryans who had placed it on a social, religious and philosophical basis. Dr. Macdonell in this connection makes the following observations in his history of Sanskrit Literature "The invaders though split into many tribes were conscious of a unity of race and religion. They styled themselves *Aryas* or "Kinsmen"

1. (10-4) 2. (10-57) 3. (10-58)

as opposed to the aborigines, to whom they gave the name of *Dasyu* or *Dāsi* ('fiends') in the later times also called *un-Āryas* or non-Āryans. The characteristic physical difference between the two races was that of colour (*varna*) the aborigines being described as black (*Kṛishna*) or 'black skins' and as the *Dasa* colour in contrast with the 'Āryan colour or our colour'. This contrast undoubtedly framed the original basis of caste, the regular name for which in Sanskrit is colour." As Dr Macdonell puts it even "the *Dasyus* appear to have been a pastoral race for they possessed large herds which were captured by the victorious Āryans. They fortified themselves in strongholds called *pur* which must have been numerous as *Indra* is sometimes said to have destroyed as many as a hundred of them for his allies." Would you from this circumstance be justified in saying that the *Dasyus* and the *Dāsas* who undoubtedly belonged to an altogether different race viz. the *un-Āryans* and several of whom even did the work of agriculture were *Vaisyas* belonging to the Āryan race of culture? It will satisfy the curious reader from the above, that the distinction of Āryans and *un-Āryans* is not a modern invention introduced in later times only as suggested by some but the distinction has existed as it is seen even to-day, since the times of Vedas of hoary antiquity.

Professor N. K. Dutta also gives colour or complexion (*Varna*) as the basis of the caste system in India. Thus he observes: "That the colour question was at the root of the *Varna* system is apparent from the meaning of the word *Varna* (complexion) and from the great emphasis with which the Vedic Indians distinguished themselves from the non-Āryans in respect of colour. That class which retained the utmost purity of colour by avoiding intermixture naturally gained precedence in the social scale. The *Brāhmins* were white, the *Kshatriyas* red, the *Vaishyas* because of large absorption of black blood were yellowish like the *Mulattoes* of America and the *Sudras* black, as is described in the *Mahābhārata*."

The development of inter-caste marriage restrictions was principally due to the racial difference between the white conquerors and the black natives and the desire of the former to "preserve their purity of blood."

separate caste having service as its occupation. In the Iranian society also of the time there existed a fourth caste called *Untu* corresponding to the caste of Sudra in the Aryans. The people then occupying India were also described in the Rig Veda as *Pancha Janāhā* or the people of the five tribes.¹ Different opinions seem to have been pronounced by different scholars as regards the interpretation of the word '*Pancha Janāhā*' (People of five tribes). Mr Keith has expressed the view that the five tribes (*Pancha Janāhā*) were the tribes of Anu, Druhyu, Yaju, Turvaṇu and Puru.² According to the school of the Anjamaṇvats as stated in Yaska's Nirukta, the five tribes were the four castes of the Aryans and the fifth class *Nishāda*.³ A similar opinion is also expressed by the well known scholiast Sāyana. Thus it will be seen from the above that even in the time of Rig Veda, there was in existence a fifth class called *Nishāda* which was so called according to the interpretation of the etymologists (Niruktas) as the members of the said class lived a degraded (*Nikṣhita*) filthy mode of life and therefore were unworthy of association with the Aryans who led a purer and a more religious life. An argument has been recently advanced by some to the effect that because the two tribes Yaju and Turvaṇu were described as Dāsas in the Rig Veda⁴ and included in the word *Pancha Janāhā* therefore the class known as Dāsas belonged to the Aryan fold.⁵ This argument is quite untenable in face of a number of passages in the Rig Veda which go to show that the class known as Dāsas was an entirely separate and distinct class from the Aryans who kept themselves entirely aloof from the said class. In the great war of the ten kings described in the Rig Veda, several aboriginal tribes of the Dāsa class had actually joined with some of the Aryan tribes for the time being. This would not therefore prove that the said tribes of the Dāsa class were Aryans as the latter belonged to a quite distinct race distinguished by its traditions, culture and civilisation.

1 (R. V 1-189). 2 (Keith Vedic Index vol 1 P 467) 3 (Y N 3-8)

4 (R. V 10 62-10) 5 See address of Mr K. M. Munshi before the Sahitya Sansada 1934).

Dāsas and Sūdras

The Sūdra class seems to have originated from the class known as Dāsas mentioned in the Ṛig Veda. The Dāsas belonged to the un-Āryan aborigines who were conquered by the Āryans and made slaves. The Āryans were distinguished from the un-Āryan Dāsas both ethnically and culturally. Thus it is stated by Prof N. K. Dutta, that 'the Āryans were white skinned, good featured, making sacrifices and worshipping gods like Agni (fire), Indra, Varuna etc, while the Dāsas or Dasyus were black skinned, noseless or flat nosed (Anās), of unintelligible speech, not sacrificing, worshipping no god and following strange customs.' We find from the Ṛig Veda that there were constant feuds between the Āryans and the Dāsas and at first the Āryans were relentless towards the conquered natives of the soil who were made slaves. The word Sūdra seems to have been used later on in the Vedic period for Dāsa. Thus we find a passage in a Brāhmana which says "one like a Sūdra shall be born in thy line, the slave of another, who may be driven away or slain at will".¹ It is probable that the Sūdra might have originally represented some prominent Dāsa tribe conquered and reduced to slavery by the Āryans. By the time of the Purusha Sukta, the Dāsas had begun to be called Sūdras and the word Sūdra might have been used for Dāsas generally since then. It may be remarked here that the conquered persons remained slaves only for a limited period the only function assigned to them being to do services to their masters. They were however shortly emancipated and the lawful son of an acquired slave became a freeman. Nor was any Āryan ever subject to slavery and if any Brāhman compelled an Āryan to do work of slaves he was fined by the king.² It seems that the Āryans did not extirpate the conquered natives of the soil but educated them and improved their status and after several generations the Dāsas by imitating the good conduct, habits, manners and morals of the Āryans were elevated to a higher status and were employed by Āryans in their services and thenceforth the new class of Sūdras might have been recognised as worthy of association with the Āryans. They were elevated to the status of Āryans and were

1. (A. B. 7-29) 2. (M. S. 8-412).

even qualified to perform the rites and ceremonies of the Āryans but without Vedic Mantras according to Manu as they were not initiated to the sacred thread (Upanayana) nor were they qualified to study the Vedas or perform Vedic sacrifices which were the exclusive privileges of persons belonging to the three higher castes who were called Dvijas or the twice-born. In the beginning, in some cases even marriages were contracted by the Āryans with the Sudras and some of the gods worshipped by the latter class of persons eg phallus, serpent, birds and trees were admitted into the Hindu pantheon. In short the relations between the Āryans and the Sudras were cordial and there was no antipathy between these classes of persons. It may be mentioned here that some of the sons born by the union of Brahmins with women of the Dāsas and Sudras (eg Kakshivat, Kavasha Adusha, and Vatsa) were very illustrious and some times were even respected as Rishis on account of the high qualities possessed by them due to the superiority of the seed.¹ Such cases however formed an exception only and they do not constitute the rule. The Brahmins however soon found that by looseness of relations between the Dāsas and Sudras, the Āryans were degrading themselves and several bad practices and customs followed by the Dāsas and the Sudras were being introduced into the fold of the Āryans. The Brahmins therefore with a view to preserve the purity of the Āryan race and culture introduced in the time of the Brahmins several restrictions in social and religious matters including marriage in the relations of the Āryans with the Sudras which took the shape of settled laws in the time of Sutras and Smritis or the period of the law givers. The professions of Brahmins or the priest (eg Purohit) and the other castes thereafter became hereditary and Hindu religion was put on a sound and firm basis by the Brahmins, who traced their descent from seven great Rishis and had distinct names for their *Gotra* (founder of family) and *Pracara* (levying Rishis in the line of genealogy).

(vi) Distinction of caste on the Basis of varna (colour) and jāti (small Groups of caste).

We have seen above that at first in the time of the Rig Veda according to the traditional view the castes were only four in

1. (Bṛhaddevata 4-34-25, A. B. 8-1, P. B. 14-0)

number viz, the Brāhman, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Sūdras who are said to have been created from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet of the Primeval person, Vnāt Purusha. These castes formed the Āiyan race. The designation given to these 4 castes was *Varna* (ie fair complexion) to distinguish them from the castes of *Avarnas* (devoid of fair complexion) or the un-Āiyan Dasyus, and Dāsas who were produced by a series of crosses between the four Varnas or their descendants as Ambastha (Brāhman male and Vaishya female), Nishāda (Brāhman and Sūdra) Chāndāla (Sūdra and Brāhman) and so on. A list of the mixed castes which varies in the different law books as regards their origin etc., is given in the foot note below for information of the reader. There are at present more than about 3000 castes in India varying in size and mode of origin. Besides the mode of crossing between the four Varnas and their descendants, there are also several other modes of Origin of the present day castes among the Hindus as pointed out by Professor N K Dutt. Thus he says: "Many castes were formed by a degradation from the original Varnas on account of non-observance of sacred rites. These are called *Vrātyas*. Thus Vrātya Brāhmans were known as 1 Bhrijjakantaka, 2. Avantya, 3 Vatadhana, 4 Pushpadha and 5 Saikha. Viātya or degraded

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| *1. Murdhavasika (Brāhman & Kshatriya) | 17. Kukkutaka (Sūdra and Nishāda) |
| 2 Mahishya (Kshatriya and Vaishya) | 18 Svapacha (Khatti and Ugra) |
| 3. Karana (Vaisya and Sūdra) | 19 Vena (Vaideha and Ambastha) |
| 4 Ambasta (Brāhman and Vaisya) | 20 Samindhia (Dasyu and Ayogava) |
| 5. Nishāda or Parasava (Brāhman and Sūdra) | 21 Maitreyaka (Vaideha and Ayogava) |
| 6 Ugia (Kshatriya and Sūdra) | 22. Maigava Kaivaita, or Dāsa (Nishāda and Ayogava) |
| 7 Sūta (Kshatriya and Brāhman) | 23. Maravara (Nishāda & Vaideha) |
| 8. Māgadha (Vaisya and Kshatriya) | 24 Meda (Vaideha and Nishāda) |
| 9. Vaideha (Vaishya and Brāhman) | 25 Andhra (Vaideha and Kāiāvara) |
| 10 Ayogava (Sūdra and Vaisya) | 26 Pandusopāka (Chāndāla & Vaideha) |
| 11. Khattiri (Sūdra and Kshatriya) | 27 Ahindika (Nishāda & Vaideha) |
| 12. Chāndāla (Sūdra and Brāhman) | 28 Sopaka (Chāndāla and Pukkasa) |
| 13 Avrita (Brāhman and Ugia) | 29 Antyavasayin (Chandala & Nishāda) |
| 14. Abhura (Brāhman and Ambasta) | (See N K Dutta's origin of caste in India Vol I) |
| 15. Digvana (Brāhman and Ayogava) | |
| 16. Pukkasa (Nishāda and Sūdra) | |

Kshatriyas became 1 Jhalla 2 Malla 3, Lakhavi 4 Nata 5 Karana 6 Khasa 7 Dravida 8, Pundraka 9 Odra 10 Kamboja 11 Yavana 12 Saka 13 Parada 14 Palhva 15 China 16 Kuāta and 17 Darada Similarly degraded Vaisyas became 1 Sudhanvan 2 Acharyya 3 Karusha 4 Vyannian 5 Maitra and 6 Satvata"¹

(vii) Determination of caste by birth and not profession.

A theory has been propagated by some under the champion ship of Mr Nesfield that the distinctions of caste as seen among the Āryans were based on distinctions of professions carried on by them for their livelihood, and that too long after the Āryans and un-Āryans had been united into one people. It excludes all influence of race and religion from the origin and growth of the caste system. This theory does not seem to be correct as the determination of caste among the Āryans was made from the very earliest times according to birth.² Although distinct professions were enjoined for the different castes by the law-givers there was no such restriction in the Vedic times as appears from the Rig Veda. Thus it is stated in one hymn of the Rig Veda, that the author of the hymn was a poet by profession while his father carried on the profession of a physician and his mother that of grinding.³ It appears from the above verse in the Rig Veda, as observed by Prof Kern and Dr Haug that in the time of the Rig Veda, there were no restrictions enjoining persons of certain castes only to carry on certain professions nor were the professions then hereditary. Even in the time of the Smritis, the restrictions and regulations about the carrying on of certain professions by certain castes only had undergone considerable changes and it would be incorrect to base the distinctions of caste on distinctions of professions carried on by them. Thus in times of distress a Brahmin was allowed to do the profession of a Kshatriya or a Vaishya. Similarly Kshatriya and Vaishya were also allowed to carry on the profession of the castes below theirs.⁴ You cannot therefore say that a Brahmin is a Kshatriya or a Vaishya merely because he carried on professions of the latter castes. In short a man's caste is determined by birth

1. (N. K. Dutta's origin of caste in India Vol. I)

2. (R. V. 10-90-12 M. S. 10-74) 3. (R.V. 9-112-3). 4. (10-81, 82),

alone and not by qualities or professions followed by him as suggested by certain modern reformers as according to the Vedic theory a man's birth in a particular caste is determined by the Supreme Being or God only who alone gives birth to him in a particular body as the offspring of certain parents belonging to a particular caste according to the deeds good or bad done by him in the past life by way of requiting them in the present life so as to induce him to lead a religious and moral life as ordained by the sacred law to secure a birth in a higher caste in the next life. The same principle is also followed in the Bhagwad Gita,¹ where our Lord Shri Krishna has said that "the fourfold caste has been created by him (i.e. by God) according to the distribution of the constituents of their nature and their actions" which could only mean the qualities and actions in the previous life as no man is observed to possess qualities or marks of any particular caste at the time of his birth, his qualities and aptitudes for a particular profession of life being developed only later on. This verse is misinterpreted by the modern Ārya Samājist reformers.

The rules and regulations relating to castes have been laid down by the law-givers in the Dharma Shāstras on the basis of express texts in the Vedas, for the guidance, purity and uplift of the four castes of the Āryans only and not for the un-Āryans who formed a separate class by themselves and who were outside the pale of the castes as laid down for the Āryans in the sacred laws. The un-Āryans lived separately from the Āryans at the end of the city or village,² and they were governed by the peculiar customs and usages of their own tribe as in the case of the Tiyars of Malabar and Travancore, the Nans of Malabar, the Todas of the Nilgiris, the Teeluis of Oudh, and the aboriginal tribes residing in the other parts of India. Thus the practice of polyandry prevailed largely among the tribes known as the Tiyars of Malabar and the Todas of the Nilgiris as also among the low caste Malyalis of Cochin and one woman was the wife of several husbands. This custom however never prevailed among the Āryans, as stated by Mr Mayne in his Hindu law.

1. (B. G. 4-13). 2. (10-51).

(viii) Offsprings of mixed Marriages (Varna Sankara)
(Anuloma and Pratiloma.)

Apart from the 2 classes known as the Āryans and the un-Āryans mentioned above, there was a third class of persons who owed their origin to a confusion of castes (*Varna-Sankara*) brought about by intermarriage between men and women of different castes. Thus a marriage of a male belonging to the three higher castes with a woman of a lower caste was *Anu-loma* and the children of such marriages were inferior in status to their fathers on account of a blemish of their mother¹. While, the marriage of a woman of the three higher castes with a man of the lower caste was called *Prati loma* and the offspring of such marriage was considered as degraded and sinful as belonging to no caste (*Varna Apctam*)². Being illegitimate, such offsprings were not entitled to inherit the property of their father. The offspring begotten by a Brāhman on a Sudra woman was called a *Nishāda* which is a low caste³ while that by a Sudra male on a lady of the Brāhman caste was called a *Chandāla* who was considered the most sinful and degraded of all creatures and not worthy of association with the Āryans as stated by the law-givers in the Dharma Shāstras.⁴ Similarly low-born sons born by such *Prati-loma* marriages were called *Śivapūka* (or the eater of dog's flesh) *Pukkasa* a (very low caste) and so forth. All these persons were untouchables, and all intercourse with them was interdicted by the law givers. The children begotten by *Anuloma* marriages had to perform the duties of twice-born persons,⁵ but those begotten by *Pratiloma* marriages were treated as equal to Sudras as regards their duties and were given very low professions such as killing fish, slaughter of animals, working in leather etc.⁶ Thus *Manu* says "According to the power of the seed of the person by whom these persons are begotten by mixed marriages, they obtained among men more exalted or lower rank in successive births."⁷ Thus the offspring of *Anuloma* marriage was exalted to a higher rank in the next birth, while the offspring of *Prati-loma* marriage was degraded to a lower rank in the next

1 (10-14).

2 (10-57).

3 (10-8).

4 (10-12, 16-51).

5 (10-41).

6 (10-36 48 49).

7 (10-42).

birth. The law-givers have enjoined the Āryans fulfilling a religious duty not to seek intercourse or contract marriages with un-Āryans as also low caste hybrid bastards (Vaina Sankara) begotten by Pratiloma marriage,¹ evidently with the object of preserving the purity and culture of the Āryan race. Though the law-givers have recognised Anuloma marriages of persons belonging to the three highest castes with women of lower castes, they had done so for times of distress only. However Manu has interdicted the marriage of a Brāhman and a Kshatriya with a Sūdrā girl as his first wife even in distress as sinful,² and such a Brāhman will go to hell after death, if he takes a Sūdra wife to his bed, and if he begets a child by her, he will lose the rank of a Brāhman.³ The practice of Anuloma marriages has since died away and such marriages are not favoured by the high caste Hindus who condemn them and they scrupulously observe the rule of marrying with girls belonging to their own caste as laid down by the sages Manu, Yājñalkya, and others. Even if a man born in a great family spring from criminal intercourse, he will certainly possess the faults of his father, be they small or great⁴. But that kingdom in which such bastards sully the purity of the castes are born perishes quickly together with its inhabitants⁵. Dying without the expectation of a reward, for the sake of Brāhman and of cows or in the defence of women and children secures beatitude to those excluded from the Āryan community (Bāhya)⁶

The sons whom the twice born beget on wives of equal caste but who not fulfilling their sacred duties are excluded from the *Savitrī* are called *Vrātyas*⁷. The sons of the twice born begotten on wives of the next lower castes by Anuloma marriage are also called *Anantaras* (belonging to the next lower caste) on account of the blemish in their mothers⁸. The 5 sons by Anuloma marriage also beget, the one on the females of the other, a great many despicable sons even more sinful than their fathers and excluded from the Āryan community (Bāhya)⁹. The sons begotten by Pratiloma marriage beget similar races on women of their own caste, and they also produce the like with females of their mother's caste (Jāti) and with females of higher

1. (10-53). 2. (3-14) 3. (3-17) 4. (10-60). 5. (10-61). 6. (10-62).
7. (10-20). 8. (10-14) 9. (10-29)

ones¹ Just as a Sudra begets on a Brāhman female a being excluded from the Āryan community, even so a person himself excluded procreates with females of the four castes sons more worthy of being excluded than he himself.² Men excluded by the Āryans, who approach females of a higher rank, beget races still more worthy to be excluded.³ A Nishāda woman bears to a chandala a son called *Antyavasūyin* employed in burial grounds and despised even by those excluded from the Āryan community.⁴ These races which originate in a confusion of the castes and have been described according to their fathers and mothers may be known by their occupations, whether they conceal or openly show themselves.⁵ Six sons begotten by Āryans on women of equal and the next lower castes (*Anantara*) by Anuloma marriage have the duties of twice born men, but all those born in consequence of a violation of the law (i.e. by *Pratiloma* marriage) are as regards their duties equal to Sudras.⁶ Certain Kshatriyas also in consequence of the omission of the sacred rites and of their not consulting Brāhmanas have gradually sunk in this world to the condition of Sudras.⁷ All those tribes which are excluded from the Community of persons belonging to the four castes are called *Dasyus*, whether they speak the language of barbarians (*Mlecchas*) or that of the Āryans.⁸ Near well-known trees, burial grounds, on mountains and in groves, let these low caste tribes dwell, known by certain marks and subsisting by their peculiar professions.⁹

(ix) Duties and occupations of Chāṇḍālas and svapachas
(degraded classes of persons)

The dwelling of *Chandālas* (born of a Brahman female and a Sudra male,) and *Svapachas* (the eaters of dogs' flesh) shall be outside the village, they must be made *Apapātis* (i.e. the vessels used by them must be thrown away) and their wealth shall be dogs and donkeys.¹⁰ Their dress shall be the garments of the dead, they shall eat their food from broken dishes black iron shall be their ornaments and they must always wander from place to place.¹¹ A man who fulfils a religious duty shall not seek intercourse with them their transactions shall be among themselves and their

1 (10-27). 2 (10-30). 3 (10-31). 4 (10-39). 5 (10-40). 6 (10-41).
7 (10-43). 8 (10-45). 9 (10-50). 10 (10-51). 11 (10-52).

marriages with their equals.¹ Their food shall be given to them by others (than an Āryan) in a broken dish; at night they shall not walk about in villages and in towns.² By day, they may go about for the purpose of their work distinguished by marks (i.e. by a by a thunderbolt or by axes, adzes and so forth used for executing criminals and carried on the shoulder or by non ornaments and the like) at the king's command, and they shall carry the corpses of persons who have no relatives, that is the settled rule.³ By the king's order they shall always execute the criminals in accordance with the law, and they shall take for themselves the clothes, the beds, and the ornaments of such criminals.⁴

(x) Whether there could be a change of 'castes in this very life or in succeeding lives only ?

Next as regards the question whether a man's caste could be changed at pleasure in this life or whether such change could take place in the next life, Manu gives his decision as follows "If a female of the caste sprung from a union of the Bīāhman male and a Sūdia female bear children to one of the higher caste, the inferior tribe attains the highest caste (i.e. caste of a Brāhman) within the seventh generation.⁵ Thus a Sūdia attains the rank of a Bīāhman and in a similar manner a Brāhman sinks to the level of a Sūdra, but know thou that it is the same with the offspring of a Kshatriya or of a Vaishya.⁶ According to the explanation given by Medhatithi and Kulluka on the above verse, if the son of a Brāhman male and a Sūdia female and his descendants marry Sudra wives, the seventh descendant will be a pure Sūdra. If a doubt should arise with whom the prominence is, whether with him whom an Āryan by chance begot on a non-Āryan female or with the son of a Brāhman woman by a non-Āryan, the decision is as follows — 'He who was begotten by an Āryan on a non-Āryan female (i.e. a Sūdia female) may become like to an Āryan by his virtues, he whom an Āryan mother bears to a non-Āryan father, is and remains unlike to an Āryan.'⁷ The law prescribes that neither of the two shall receive the sacraments, the first being excluded on account of the lowness

1. (10-53)

2 (10-54).

3 (10-55)

4 (10-56)

5. (10-64)

6. (10-65)

7. (10-66, 67).

of his origin, the second because the union of his parents was against the order of the castes.¹ The sage Yagnavalkya also states a similar opinion in the matter. Thus he says "Pratiloma offspring begotten by a father of an inferior caste on a mother of superior caste and Anuloma offspring begotten by a father of superior caste on a mother of inferior caste are known as *Asit* (bad) and *Sat* (good) respectively."² The attainment of a higher caste is known to take place in the seventh or the fifth Yuga (cycle of birth) while lower caste in the seventh, sixth or the fifth birth.³ Taking their stand on the verse in Manu which states 'A Sudra attains the rank of Brahman (Brahmanta) and in a like manner a Brahman sinks to the level of a Sudra (Sudrata)' the Ārya Samāyists deduce from it a meaning that according to Manu a Sudra can become a Brahman and a Brahman can become a Sudra in this very life. They further apply the above verse to support their theory that caste is determined not by birth but by qualities and actions of a man in this life. They argue that if a person born in the caste of Brahman does the business of Sudra he ought to be considered not a Brahman but a Sudra and similarly if a person born in the caste of Sudra does the business of a Brahman (e.g. teaching which is the peculiar profession of a Brahman) the Sudra should be considered a Brahman and not a Sudra. This construction of the verse in Manu would however be entirely unsustainable on an examination of the said verse in light of the preceding and succeeding verses. The words used in the text of Manu are only 'the rank of Brahman (Brahmanta)' and 'the rank of a Sudra (Sudrata)' which mean the rank of Brahman and Sudra only and not an actual state of Brahman or Sudra as construed wrongly by the Samāyists. In the preceding verse, Manu states definitely that the actual conversion of an inferior caste to a higher caste takes place within several generations only and not in this life and he gives his final decision in the matter in the next verse by stating that offspring begotten by an Āryan on a Non-Āryan woman by Anuloma marriage may become like to an Āryan by his virtues and while the offspring begotten by a non-Āryan on an Āryan woman is and remains unlike to an Āryan." The above discussion would clearly show that

1. (M. 8 10-68).

2. (1-95)

3. (1-96)

Manu does not support the theory started by the reformers that a person's caste could be converted in this very life as being opposed to the Vedic theory that a man's caste is determined by birth only. The above construction is further supported by another text in Āpastambha Dharmasūtra which distinctly says that a man's caste could be changed only in the next life and not in this life. The said text runs as follows "In successive births, men of the lower castes are born in the next higher one if they have fulfilled their duties. Similarly in successive births men of the higher castes are born in the next lower one if they neglect their duties"¹ This text also is misinterpreted by the Ārya Samajists to support their view that a person's caste is determined by quality and not by birth but which is evidently untenable in light of the above discussion.

**(xi) Whether a Sudra is entitled to study the Vedas
and perform Vedic sacrifices?**

The right to study the Vedas belonged to the three twice-born castes, Brāhman, Kshatriya and Vaishya only according to the Vedic theory. The sage Jaimini a great authority on Vedic rites and rituals, has discussed the matter in the Pūrva Mimāṃsā and given his decision in the matter as follows: He first gives a prima facie view (Pūrva Paksha) on the question whether a Sudra is entitled to perform Vedic sacrifice and says that "all the four castes are entitled to perform a Vedic sacrifice, because in the Vedas there is no distinction"² The author next refutes the above view by stating, "On the other hand under an injunction, the three castes are entitled to establish fire, the Sudra has no connection with the sacrifice. There is a Brāhmaṇa text which says 'A Brāhman shall establish fire in spring, a Kshatriya shall establish fire in summer, while a Vaishya shall establish fire in autumn' This is also the opinion of Ātīeya"³ The author next refutes other objections by stating that "the Vedic text by which the right is conferred refers only to the first three castes"⁴ Next he raises another objection that "A Sudra also possesses a desire to be qualified for a sacrifice by education and so he is entitled to perform a sacrifice"⁵ to which the author gives a reply "as the purification

1. (A DS 2-5-10, 11) 2. (J S 6-1-25). 3. (6-1-26) 4. (6-1-33). 5. (6-1-34)

ceremony (e.g. Upanayana or the initiation ceremony) is performed for the purpose of Vedic study to which the three higher castes only are entitled and not a Sudra the latter is not entitled to perform the purification ceremony with Vedic Mantras and he further refers to a clear Vedic text which enjoins the initiation of the three higher castes only.¹ The author further says that 'a Sudra is not entitled to perform a Vedic sacrifice by reason of his being not entitled to the study of the Vedas and no teacher will teach to the Sudra and no Vedic scholar recognises his claim to the same'.² The author both relies on the authority of the Veda in support of his above view.³ Badarayana the author of the *Uttara Mimamsa* or *Veṅṇānta* also denies the right of Sudra to study the Veda or perform Vedic sacrifices or other Vedic sacraments.⁴ Manu also relying on express Vedic texts says 'A Sudra cannot commit an offence causing loss of caste (Pāṭaka) and he is not worthy to receive the Vedic sacraments (Samskāras), he has no right to fulfil the civil law of the Āryas yet, there is no prohibition against his fulfilling certain portions of the law (e.g. those relating to good and righteous conduct)'.⁵ Sudras who are desirous to gain religious merit and know their duty commit no sin but gain praise if they imitate the practices of virtuous men without reciting sacred texts.⁶ Further Manu says 'The more a Sudra keeps himself free from envy, imitates the behaviour of the virtuous, the more he gains without being censured (i.e. exaltation in this world and the next)'.⁷ In spite of the clear position of the Vedic law as explained above the Ārya Sāṃjists have come forward to assert that a Sudra is entitled to the initiation ceremony (Upanayana), to the wearing of the sacred thread to study the sacred Veda and to perform sacrifice-lessons which were far from the mind of the Vedic Rishis of old. The Sāṃjists rely on a text of the *Yajurveda samhitā* in support of their above view which is again misinterpreted by them. Some of the reformers even go to the length of deducing from this verse a meaning that even the Untouchables (*Antyajas*) who are outside the pale of caste are entitled to receive instructions of

1 (6-1-35).

2 (6-1-37)

3 (6-1-35).

4 (V S. 1-3-36 to 38).

5 (10-126).

6 (10-127)

7 (10-128)

Vedic Mantras. The said Vedic text has been translated by Mr. Griffith as follows "That I to all the people may address this salutary speech, to priest and noblemen, Sūdra and Arya (i.e. Vaishya, the agriculturist and trader, the man of the people) to one of our kin (svāya) and to the stranger (Chāṇanāya); dear may I be to God and goodon giver, fulfilled be this my hope, be that my portion."¹ This verse nowhere states that one may give instructions in the Vedas to either a Sūdra or an Antyaja (Untouchable) as is sought to be made out by the reformers. The said Mantia merely expresses a pious wish on the part of the person reciting it, that he may always address a blessed speech to the four castes or to his relatives or strangers as may not offend them, and he further prays the Gods as also the person to whom the speech is addressed and who is praised thereby to favour him with alms and gifts (Dakshina) so as to procure to the patron religious merit. The word 'Chāṇanāya' in the above text is again wrongly translated by some reformers so as to include therein even Chāṇdālas, and others called *Antyajas* belonging to the class of Untouchables but Mr. Griffith has translated the word as 'Stranger' exactly like Uvata the well known Commentator of the Yajurveda samhitā who explains the word Chāṇana as made up of 2 words, 'Cha' and 'Aṇana' which mean "and others." Thus there is no Vedic authority whatever to support the view that the Sūdras are entitled to study the Veda or perform Vedic sacrifices. All the law-givers have given their unanimous verdict against the Sūdras and they have declared in clear terms relying on express Vedic Texts that the Sūdras have no such right as is sought to be made out in their favour by the reformers

(xii) Religious duties and professions of the four castes.
(Chātur varna dharma)

Manu has laid down the duties and professions which are to be followed by the four castes. As regards Brāhmans, Manu says that the Supreme Being assigned to them the duties of teaching and studying the Veda, sacrifices for their own benefit and for others, and giving and accepting alms.² The Kshatriya he commanded

1 (Y. V. S. 26-2) 2. (1-88).

to protect the people, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study the Veda and to abstain from attaching himself to sensual pleasures,¹ the Vaishya to tend cattle, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study the Vedas, to trade, to lend money and to cultivate the land.² One occupation only the Lord has prescribed to the Sudras viz to serve meekly even these other three castes.³ I have also described above while dealing with the doctrines in Manu Smṛiti what religious duties and professions including those in distressed times were laid down by Manu for the different castes to which the reader's attention is invited. I shall here mention only in general the duties to be observed by the four castes as specially modified for the Kali age by the law-givers. Manu has laid down for a Brāhman six religious duties (*Shat Karma*) viz., study, teaching, colobration of and officiating as a priest at religious sacrifices and giving and taking of gifts.⁴ Pārāsara adds that "a Brāhman who daily performs the above six religious duties (*Shat Karma*) and eats the residue of his Homa (sacrificial oblations) after having gratified the gods and guests never suffers any bad luck in life."⁵ Pārāsara enjoins the following religious duties for a Brāhman viz., performance of Sandhyā, ablation, Japa (Muttering of the Gāyatri prayer) and Homa (sacrifice in fire), study of the Vedas worship of the gods (e.g. Shiva, Vishnu, Ganpati, Sun and Goddess etc), performance of the Vaishva deva sacrifice (the five daily sacrifices as taught in Manu) and the act of gratifying the guests.⁶ Now as regard the duties of a Brāhman in distressed times Pārāsara says that he may take to agriculture as a means of livelihood.⁷ Pārāsara however interdicts for a Brāhman, the sale of oil or any sweet vegetable juice, but he permits him to sell paddy or any kindred cereal as well as hay, wood, faggots etc.⁸ Manu also says A Brāhman must avoid selling condiments, cooked food, sesame stones, salt, cattle and human beings.⁹ As regards the three other castes, Pārāsara lays down the following rules. *Kshatriyas* should protect their subject people, conquer the armed forces of their adversaries with mighty prowess and rule the country according to

1. (1-39). 2. (1-90). 3. (1-91). 4. (M. S. 10-75). 5. (P. S. 1-87).
 6. (P. S. 1-38) 7. (P. S. 2-2) 8. (P. S. 2-8) 9. (M. S. 10-86).

the rule of Virtue,¹ and he may also do agriculture.² The profession of *Varshya* permits of dealing in gems and metals, raising cattle, merchandise and cultivation.³ As regards the *Sūdra* caste, service to the Brāhman is the highest virtue⁴. A *Sūdra* is further permitted to carry on the business of salt, honey, oil, curd, whey, clarified butter and milk and he commits no sin thereby⁵. A *Sūdrā* should not eat any prohibited article nor go to an interdicted woman, otherwise he would be punished in hell⁶. Pārāsara further lays down that a *Varshya* or *Sūdra* may live by trade, agriculture or handicraft⁷. Mādhava has interpreted this verse to mean that in Kaliyuga all the four castes are allowed to live on trade and handicraft as also agriculture. The observance of the duties laid down for the 4 castes since ages past by a regular succession without break in continuity is called *Sanātana religion* by Pārāsara.⁸

(xiii) General rules of religious conduct for the twice-born and their relaxation in the Kali Age and in distressed times.

Every twice-born person shall take his bath every day⁹. After that he shall attend to his daily rites of Japa, Homa and worship of the gods, Study of the Vedas and feed one, two, three or four *Snātaka* Brāhmans (one who has completed his course of Vedic studies and graduated)¹⁰. The rules of conduct for the twice-born relating to touch, food, purity and duties, professions and so on were not rigid and fixed for all times but a considerable relaxation was made in the same according to times and different rules were applied for the Kali age and for distressed times as pointed out by the law-givers.

(xiv) Excommunication from caste for infraction of caste rules.

A Hindu caste is an autonomous body governed by its own rules laid down by the sacred laws framed by the law-givers as based on *Shruti*, *Smṛti* and traditions of hoary antiquity. Every caste is a self-contained unit having complete independence and liberty as regards the internal management of all its affairs, social,

1. (P. S. 1-57) 2. (P. S. 2-15) 3. (P. S. 1-60). 4. (P. S. 1-61)
 5. (P. S. 1-62) 6. (P. S. 1-63) 7. (P. S. 2-15). 8. (P. S. 2-16).
 9. (P. S. 2-5) 10. (P. S. 2-6)

economic, religious or otherwise and even the British Courts under the law of the land have refused to interfere with the decision of the castes so long as they are not opposed to the rules of natural Justice. The caste has got its method of enforcing a scrupulous observance of its rules on the part of its members under penalty of excommunication for any infraction of the caste rules and restrictions in matters of inter-dining inter-marriage pollution penances for sins and offences and so forth. Thus one can get initiation on the part of the males of the three higher castes at a proper age, intermarriage with persons belonging to the lower castes, the outcasts and others, inter-dining and other social intercourse with outcasts, sinners and the fulfilment and the commission of offences involving sin entailed the penalty of excommunication of the person committing the same. Intercourse, eating and intermarriage should be avoided with a fallen Brahmin or person belonging to the three twice-born castes who is not at all even after the prescribed period. He could be taken into the castes even after generations after undergoing the necessary penance prescribed in the Shāstras.¹ The law-givers have laid down the following rules in this matter. The murderer of a Brahmin, he who drinks spirituous liquor, the violator of a Guru's (religious preceptors) bed, he who has connection with the female relatives of his mother and of his father within 5 degrees or with sisters and their daughters, he who steals the gold of a Brahmin, an atheist, he who constantly repeats blamable acts, he who does not cast off persons guilty of a crime causing loss of caste and he who forsakes blameless relatives become out-castes. Likewise those who instigate others to acts causing loss of caste and he who for a year associates with out-castes become out-castes. To be an out-cast means to be deprived of the right to follow the lawful occupations of twice-born men and to be deprived after death of the rewards of meritorious deeds. He who forsakes his priest and teacher unjustifiably becomes an outcast.² Vasistha's list of great sins (*Mahāpātakas*) which involved loss of castes is shorter and it runs as follows. (1) The Violation of Guru's bed (2) Drinking of spirituous liquor (3) Murder (4) Theft and (5) Spirituous or matrimonious connection with outcasts.³

1 (A. D. S. 1-1-1-28 to 36) 2 (G. D. S. 21-1 to 5, V. D. S. 1-20 to 23)
3 (V. D. S. 1-10 to 21)

Among acts which make men impure (ashuchikaranı) but not degraded from the caste (pataniyanı) according to Āpastambha are "the co-habitation of Āryans with Sūdra women, eating the flesh of forbidden animals, eating what is left by a Sūdra, the co-habitation of Āryans with low-caste women. But some declare that these acts also cause a man to lose his caste."¹ For certain offences, the delinquent had to expiate by living as an outcast for a certain number of years and for others he had to undergo a certain penance as prescribed in the Shāstras. The rules regarding loss of caste did not apply to the Sūdras who enjoyed greater liberty in this respect. Manus says in this connection "Sūdras cannot commit an offence causing loss of caste."² The Sūdras were however not neglected and they were enjoined to lead a moral life. High hopes of spiritual elevation were held out to the Sūdras and persons belonging to low-castes to inspire and induce them to lead a purer and better life so as to secure good rewards in future. According to Manus by leading a high moral life a Sūdra can obtain even the higher world.³ The above rule was based on the law of Karma (actions) and the doctrine of transmigration of the soul which was definitely established in the Upanishad period. "With whatever disposition of mind a man performs any act, he reaps its fruit in a future body endowed with the same quality."⁴ Thus a Sūdra by leading a well regulated life can aspire to be born as a Brāhman in the distant future. It would be doing a great disservice to the Hindu religion as also to our motherland to preach the new lessons of equality of all irrespective of questions of caste, creed, educational and cultural qualifications, purity and so on as they are likely to create great dissensions amongst Hindus, raise a spirit of revolt against the established order and ultimately lead more to a spirit of degradation rather than an elevation or uplift of this very class of persons for whose benefit the so-called reformers are assiduously carrying on propaganda work and are even invoking the aid of certain proposed legislation. It is unfortunate that the pioneers of the new movement by seeking directly or indirectly to destroy the beneficial institution of caste of hoary antiquity and religious authority are unconsciously digging an eternal grave for the great citadel of

1 (A. D. S. 1-7-21-12 to 18). 2 (10-126) 3. (10-128). 4. (M. S. 12-81).

liberty which ought to be vindicated by all loyal children of the country having the good and welfare of their country and their fellow-brethren at heart.

(xv) Conclusion

It may be mentioned in conclusion that the institution of caste was never being based on the principle of division of labour. Every person's caste was determined by birth by the Lord in conformity with the law of his relative position in the cosmic and biology. The rules prescribed for the various castes by the law-givers were meant for the welfare of the society as a whole including the backward castes of Sudras and their better feelings of a spiritual brotherhood having co-operation and unity amongst mankind in general by a responsible fulfilment of the duties laid down upon them without any unhealthy spirit of community towards one another.

(9) Rules of conduct laid down for the four orders of life (*Āśhrama Dharma*)

The authors of the Dharma-shastras have laid down certain rules of conduct for four orders of life of the *Āryans* viz. (a) the *Brahmachārya* *Āśhrama* or the order of the students (b) the *Grhastha* *Āśhrama* or order of the house holders (c) the *Saṃnyāsa* *Āśhrama* or the order of hermits residing in the forest away from cities and villages and (d) The *Sanyāsa* *Āśhrama* or the order of ascetics leading a wandering life for spiritual enlightenment and emancipation. These orders of life were already established so far back as in the time of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. Manu has taken an average of 100 years for a human life which he has divided into four equal parts of 25 years each corresponding with the orders of life mentioned above. A man is enjoined to pass through these four orders step by step by gradation for achieving perfection.

(1) Duties of a Student (*Brahmachārī*)

Age for the Initiation Ceremony (*Upanayana*)

Manu lays down that the initiation ceremony of a Brahman shall be performed in the fifth year after conception that of a Kshatriya in the sixth and that of a Vaishya in the eighth.¹ Yajñavalkya prescribes the 8th, the 11th, and the 12th years as the ages for the initiation of a Brāhmana, a Kshatriya and a Vaishya respec-

tively.¹ The time for the Savitṛi (initiation) of a Brāhman does not pass, until completion of the 16th year, that of a Kshatṛiya until the completion of the 22nd year and that of a Vaishya until the completion of the 24th year.² In fact the 16th, the 22nd and the 24th years constitute the limit of the periods within which the initiation must be performed for the said castes respectively.³ After the lapse of the above periods the men of the three higher castes who have not been initiated become sinners (patita) and they are excluded from all religious rites and Savitṛi (initiation) and are outcasts (*Vrātyas*) and censured by the Āryans until they perform the *Vrātyastoma* penance as laid down in the Tāndya Brāhman.⁴

Initiation of the twice-born (Dwijas) by the teacher.

The first birth proceeds from the parents and the second from the Mounji (investiture with the sacred thread), therefore the Brāhmanas, the Kshatṛiyas and the Vaishyas are called the twice-born (*Dwijas*).⁵ Manu says that according to the injunction of the revealed Texts the first birth of an Āryan is from his natural mother, the second on the tying of the girdle of Munja grass (*Maunji bandhana*) and the third on the initiation to the performance of the Vedic sacrifice (*Yajna Dīkshā*).⁶ Among those three, the birth which is symbolized by the investiture with the girdle of Munja grass is the birth for the sake of Veda, they declare that in that birth, the Savitṛi verse (i.e. *Gāyatrī*) is his mother and the teacher (*Āchārya*) is his father.⁷ Until initiation and before his birth from the Veda, a twice born person is on a level with a Sūdra.⁸

Who is an Āchārya or Teacher?

The teacher (*Āchārya*) is the Brāhman who initiates a pupil and teaches him the Veda (together with the Kalpas i.e. *Sūtras* relating to Vedic sacrifices and the *Rahasyas* i.e. *Secret doctrines* in the *Upanishads*).⁹ But he who for his livelihood teaches a portion only of the Veda or the *Angas* (appendages) of the Veda is called the sub-teacher (*Upādhyāya*).¹⁰ That Brāhman who performs in accordance with the rules of the Veda, the rites such as *Gaibhādhiāna* (i.e. *conception rite*) and so forth and gives food to

1. (Y S 1-14). 2 (2-38, A.D S 1-1-1-27 to 37) 3 (Y S 1-37). 4 (Y.S 1-38; M.S. 2-39) 5 (Y S 1-39) 6 (2-169) 7 (2-170) 8.(2-172). 9 (2-140). 10 (2-141).

the child is called the *Guru* (the venerable one)² He who being duly chosen for the purpose, performs the Agni Adhyaya (i.e. the rite of setting up the holy fire) sacrifice by offering into fire oblations of cooked food called *Pakayajna*, (e.g. the sacrifices held on the new moon and full moon days etc.) and the Vedic sacrifices (e.g. Agnistoma etc.) for another man, is called his officiating priest (*Ritvik*).³ The teacher (*Ucharya*) is 10 times more venerable than a sub-teacher (*Upādhyaya*) the father a hundred times more than the teacher, (who formally initiates him) but the mother is a thousand times more than the father.⁴ Of him who gives natural birth and him who gives the knowledge of the Veda the giver of the Veda is the more venerable father, for the birth for the sake of the Veda ensures eternal rewards both in this and after life.⁵ Let him consider that he received a more animal existence when his parents begat him through mutual affection and when he was born from the womb of his mother.⁶ But that birth which a teacher acquainted with the whole Veda in accordance with the law procures for him through the *Savitri* is real exempt from age and death.⁷ The pupil must know that that man also who benefits him by instructions in the Veda be it little or more is called in the institutes of Manu his *Guru* in consequence of that benefit conferred by instruction in the Veda.⁸ The Brāhman who is the giver of the birth for the sake of the Veda and the teacher of the prescribed duties becomes by law the father of an aged man even though he himself be a child.⁹ Traditional mode (*Paramparā*) of handing down knowledge of the Veda from a proficient teacher to pupil

It was the first duty of the student to begin the study of the Veda by receiving regular instructions from a qualified teacher,¹⁰ who handed down the same to his pupils orally by the traditional method. These oral instructions in the Vedas were imparted regularly from teacher to pupil in a regular and unbroken chain of succession (*Paramparā*) without any break in continuity. The twice-born who neglected the study of the Vedas and the performance of daily rites and prayers prescribed for them will be blamed among virtuous men.¹¹ An offering consisting of muttered prayers is 10 times more

1. (2-142). 2. (2-143, Y S 1-35). 3. (2-145). 4. (2-146). 5. (2-147).
6. (2-148). 7. (2-149). 8. (2-150). 9. (2-70). 10. (2-80).

efficacious than a sacrifice, a prayer which is inaudible to others surpasses it a hundred times and the mental recitation of sacred texts a thousand times¹

Sacred knowledge not to be imparted to an unworthy recipient

Manu prohibits a teacher from imparting religious instructions to an unqualified and impure student who does not observe a chaste life. Thus he says "where merit and wealth unopposed are not obtained by teaching nor at least due obedience, in such soil, sacred knowledge must not be sown, just as good seed must not be thrown on barren land."² Sacred learning approached a Brāhman and said to him 'I am thy treasure, preserve me; deliver me not to a scorner, so preserved, I shall become supremely strong.'³ 'But deliver me, as to the keeper of thy treasure to a Brāhman whom thou shalt know to be pure, of subdued senses, chaste and attentive.'⁴

Strict fulfilment of the vow of celibacy

Manu enjoins a student to lead a life of celibacy by restraining his senses which run wild among alluring sensual objects like a charioteer his horses⁵. He is also enjoined to restrain and control the internal organ or mind which is the 11th sense.⁶ Manu says "Through the attachment of his senses to sensual pleasures a man undoubtedly will incur guilt, but if he keep them under complete control he will obtain success in all his aims⁷. Desire is never extinguished by the enjoyment of desired objects, it only grows stronger like a fire fed with clarified butter."⁸ Renunciation of all sensual pleasures is far better than the attainment of them.⁹ If he keeps all the ten senses as well as the mind in control, he may gain all his aims of life (spiritual merit, wealth, desire and liberation) without reducing his body by the practice of Yoga¹⁰. Let him always sleep alone, let him never waste his manhood, for he who voluntarily wastes his manhood, breaks his vow (*Brahmacharya Vrata*)¹¹. A teacher or a student who has involuntarily wasted his manly strength must at once perform austerities, worship the sun, and afterwards thrice repeat the following verse: 'As soon as my strength return to me'¹².

1. (2-11) 2. (2-11) 3. (2-11) 4. (2-11) 5. (2-85) 6. (2-92)
7. (2-11) 8. (2-95) 9. (2-95) 10. (2-100) 11. (2-184) 12. (2-181).

Injunctions for daily prayers (Sandhyā) and studies in Veda (Svādhyāya).

Manu next lays down that a student must perform his morning and twilight prayers (*Sandhya*) and worship¹. If he neglects this, he shall be excluded like a Sudra from all duties and rights of an Ārya². Next the student is enjoined to do his daily studies in the Vedas (*Svādhyāya*)³. Manu says that "an Ārya must study the whole Veda (i.e. the Veda with its angas or appendages or one entire Sakha consisting of the Mantras and Brahmanas) together with the Āhishvas (i.e. the Upanishads or the secret doctrines of the Veda) performing at the same time various kinds of austerity (e.g. fasts etc.) and the vows prescribed by the rules of the Veda"⁴. Let the Brahman who desires to perform austerities constantly repeat the Veda for the study of the Veda is declared to be in this world the highest austerity for a Brahman⁵.

Worship of gods, manes and the sacred fire

Manu next says that every day a student having bathed and being purified must offer libations of water (*arjuna*) to the gods, sages, and manes and worship the images of gods and place fuel on the sacred fire⁶.

Offerings of burnt oblations to the sacred fire

Having brought sacred fire from a distance, let him place it anywhere but on the ground and let him make with it burnt oblations to the sacred fire, both evening and morning⁷. For neglect of this duty he had to perform the prescribed penance⁸.

Rules for begging of the food

Let him daily go to beg food⁹. A student being pure shall daily bring food from the houses of men who are not deficient in the knowledge of the Veda and who are famous for following their lawful occupations¹⁰. Let him not beg from the relatives of his teacher, nor from his own relations, unless there are no houses belonging to strangers¹¹. Or he may go to each house in the village being pure and remaining silent¹². He who performs the vow of

1. (2-101) 2. (2-103). 3. (2-104). 4. (2-105) 5. (2-106) 6. (2-176).
7. (2-186) 8. (2-187). 9. (2-182) 10. (2-183). 11. (2-184) 12. (2-185).

studentship shall constantly subsist on alms, but not eat the food of one person only. The subsistence of a student on begged food is equal in merit to fasting¹ At his pleasure he may eat when invited, the food of one man at a rite in honour of the gods, or at a funeral meal in honour of the manes, behaving however like a hermit² This duty is prescribed for a Brāhman only.³

Duty to lead a life of extreme simplicity and temperance.

The initiated student's regular daily duties after initiation until completion of his studies (samāvātan) were to offer fuel in the sacred fire, beg food, sleep on the ground and do what is beneficial to his teacher.⁴ The student is enjoined not to over-eat himself as excessive eating is prejudicial to health, to fame, and to bliss in heaven, it prevents spiritual merit and is odious among men; a student ought therefore to avoid excessive eating.⁵

Rules of abstention.

Let him abstain from honey, meat, perfumes, garlands, substances used for flavouring food, women, all substances turned acid, and from doing injury to living creatures,⁶ from anointing his body, applying collyrium to his eyes, from sensual desire, anger, covetousness, dancing, singing, and playing musical instruments,⁷ from gambling, idle disputes, back-biting, and lying, from looking at and touching women, and from hurting others.⁸

Reverential obedience to the teacher and elders.

The student is next enjoined to be obedient to his teacher and salute him with reverence.⁹ He must not sit down on the same couch or seat which is occupied by his teacher¹⁰ (or superior in learning etc.), and he who occupies a couch or seat shall rise to meet his teacher and salute him. He who habitually salutes and constantly pays reverence to the aged by doing them service obtains an increase of life, knowledge, fame and strength.¹¹ He should also salute his elders.¹² Let him not pronounce the mere name of his teacher without an honorific title and let him not mimic his gait, speech and deportment.¹³ Wherever people justly censure

1. (2-188) 2 (2-189) 3 (2-190). 4. (2-108). 5. (2-56, 57). 6. (2-177).
 7. (2-178) 8 (2-179). 9 (2-117) 10. (2-119). 11. (2-121) 12. (2-122)
 13 (2-199).

or falsely defame his teacher, there he must cover his ears or depart thence to another place¹ By censuring his teacher though justly, he will become in his next birth an ass, by falsely defaming him, a dog; he who lives on his teachers wealth will become a worm, and he who is envious of his merit larger insect.² Towards his other instructors in science (*Īdhyā Guru*), towards his relatives (e.g. uncle) to whom honour is due towards all who may restrain him from sin or may give him salutary advice let him always behave as towards his teacher³ Likewise he shall behave towards the sons and relatives of his teacher⁴ An obedient pupil obtains the knowledge which lies hidden in his teacher⁵ The teacher the father, the mother and an elder brother must not be treated with disrespect especially by a Brahman, though one be grievously offended by them⁶ The teacher is the image of Brahman, the father the image of Prajapati, (the lord of created beings), the mother the image of earth and an older full brother the image of one-self⁷ That trouble and pain which the parents undergo on the birth of their children cannot be compensated even in a hundred years⁸ Obedience towards these three (i.e. father, mother and teacher) is declared to be the best form of austerity (*tapa*) let him not perform other meritorious acts without their permission⁹ Let him always serve these three rejoicing to do what is agreeable and beneficial to them¹⁰ By honouring these three all that ought to be done by man, is accomplished that is clearly the highest duty, every other act is a subordinate duty¹¹ A Brahman who serves his teacher (*Naiṣṭhik Brahmacāri*) till the dissolution of his body reaches forthwith the eternal mansion of Brahman¹²

Behaviour towards the teachers wife

The wives of the teacher, who belong to the same caste, must be treated as respectfully as the teacher but those who belong to a different caste, must be honoured by rising and salutation¹³ Let him not perform for a wife of his teacher the offices of anointing her, assisting her in the bath, shampooing her limbs, or arranging her hair¹⁴ A pupil who is full twenty years old, and knows what

1 (2-200). 2 (2-201) 3 (2-206) 4 (2-207) 5 (2-218) 6. (2-225)
 7 (2-226) 8 (2-227). 9 (2-229). 10 (2-235). 11. (2-237) 12. (2-244)
 13 (2-210). 14. (2-211).

is becoming and unbecoming, shall not salute a young wife of his teacher by clasping her feet,¹ for it is the nature of women to seduce men. Hence the wise are never unguarded in the company of females.² Women are able to lead astray in this world not only a fool, but even a learned man, and to make him a slave of desire and anger.³ One should not therefore sit in a lonely place even with his own close female relations, for the senses are powerful, and overpower even a learned man.⁴

Respect to ladies and others deserving it.

He must behave with respect towards a lady who is the wife of another man and not a blood relation, by addressing her 'lady' (Bhavatī) or 'Beloved sister'.⁵ Manu next lays down rules to determine who should be honoured. Thus he says that wealth, kindred, age, the due performance of rites, and fifthly sacred learning are titles to respect but each later-named cause is more weighty than the preceding ones.⁶ Whatever man of the three highest castes possesses most of these five qualities, both in number and degree that man is worthy of honour among them, and so also is a Sūdra who has entered the tenth decade of his life (i.e. who is ninety years old).⁷ Way must be made for a man in a carriage, for one who is above ninety years old, for one diseased, for the carrier of a burden, for a woman, for a Snātaka (i.e. one who has bathed having completed his Vedic studies), for the King and for a bridegroom.⁸ The seniority of Brāhman is from sacred knowledge, that of Kshatriyas from valour, that of Vaishyas from wealth in grain and other goods, but that of Sūdras alone from age.⁹ A man is not therefore considered venerable because his head is grey, him who though young has learned the Veda, the gods consider to be venerable.¹⁰ As an elephant made of wood, as an antelope made of leather, such is an unlearned Brāhman, these three have nothing but the names of their kind.¹¹ As a eunuch is unproductive with women, as a cow is unprolific with a cow and as a gift made to an ignorant man yields no reward even so is a Brāhman useless who does not know the Riklās.¹²

1. (2-212)	2 (2-213)	3. (2-214)	4. (2-215)	5 (2-129)
6 (2-136)	7 (2-137).	8. (2-138)	9. (2-155)	10. (2-156)
11. (2-157).	12 (2-158)			

Lessons of good advice to be received even from a woman child or a low caste man

If a woman or a man of low caste observes a certain conduct leading to happiness (e.g. cleansing the hands by earth and water done by a Shudra or the mode of sipping water by the teacher's wife), let him diligently practise it as well as any other act (not prohibited by the sacred law) in which his heart finds pleasure.¹ He who possesses faith may receive pure learning (e.g. literature, logic etc.) even from a man of a lower caste, the highest law in worldly matters (e.g. advice not to enter into a particular locality or bathe in a particular tank, or information about the rules and regulations of the people of a particular locality or a particular king) and an excellent wife of good qualities even from a base family.² Even from poison nectar may be taken, even from a child good advice, even from an impure substance gold.³ Excellent wives learning knowledge of the law, rules of purity, good advice, and various arts, may be acquired from anybody.⁴

No gift to the teacher before Samāvartan

He who knows the sacred law must not present any gift to his teacher before the *Samāvartan* (ceremony of returning home by the student on completion of his studies after taking a bath) but when with the permission of his teacher, he is about to take the final bath let him procure a present for the venerable man according to his ability.⁵ A Brāhmin who thus passes his life as a student without breaking his vow of celibacy (*Brahmacharya Vrata*), reaches after death the highest abode and will not be born again in this world.⁶

The term of Studentship

The vow of studying the three Vedas (i.e. the Rīg-Veda, Yajur Veda and Sama Veda) under a teacher must be kept for 36 years or 18 years or 9 years, or until the student has perfectly learnt them.⁷ Mann as well as the authors of the ancient Dharma Sūtras have left out Atharva Veda possibly because it was not recognised at first on account of the magical practices in it. But

1 (2-223) 2 (2-238) 3 (2-230) 4 (2-240) 5 (2-245) 6 (2-249)
7 (3-1 Y S 1-36 G D S. 2-45 to 47 A D S 1-2-12 to 16, V D S, 8-1, B. D S 1-8-1 to 4)

Bauddhāyana includes the Atharva Veda and states that the term of studentship extends for 48 years 12 for each Veda. A student who has studied in due order the three Vedas, or two or even one only, without breaking the rules of studentship, shall enter the order of householders.¹ Taking an average of 20 years as the term of studentship commencing from the time of the initiation which took place at the age of 5 years according to Manu, the marriageable age of boys would be 25 which would correspond with the age of consummation as recommended by Shushruta, the well known author of Indian medicine. The age of a marriageable girl could not therefore be less than 14 or 15. However it is for the people themselves to determine the age of marriage which is a religious sacrament, and not for the State to interfere in such matters as is done at present by the Child Marriage Restraint Act XIX of 1929, otherwise known as the Sāidā Act, which has evoked a storm of opposition from the orthodox Hindus all over India.

(ii) The Duties of a householder (Grihastha Dharma)

At what age a student entered the order of a householder.

Having dwelt with a teacher during the fourth part of a man's life (i.e. 25 years) a Brāhman shall live during the second quarter of his life in his house after he has wedded a wife.²

Occupations for subsistence.

A Brāhman must seek a means of subsistence which either causes no, or at least little, pain to others and live by that except in times of distress.³ The persons belonging to the different castes are enjoined to follow the occupations assigned to them by Manu and the other law-givers. Manu however lays down the following duties for a Brāhman who is a *Snātaka* (i.e. one who has come to his house after studying the Vedas having taken his bath and who enters the life of a householder). Thus he says: Let him never for the sake of subsistence follow the ways of the world, let him live the pure, straightforward honest life of a Brāhman.⁴ Let him untired perform daily the rites prescribed for him in the Veda, for he who performs those according to his ability, attains to the highest state.⁵ Let him not seek wealth through pursuits to which men

1 (3-2. Y. S. 1-52) 2. (4-1). 3 (4-2). 4 (4-11). 5. (4-14).

cleave (e.g. by music and singing etc.) nor by forbidden occupations.¹ Let him not out of desire for enjoyments attach himself to any sensual pleasures, and let him carefully obviate an excessive attachment to them, by reflecting on their worthlessness in his heart.² Let him daily pore over those institutes of science (i.e. Itihāsas (History) Puranas (old chronicles) Nyaya (logic) Arthashastra (economics), medicine and astrology) which soon give increase of wisdom, those which teach the acquisition of wealth, those which are beneficial for other worldly concerns and likewise over Nigamas (i.e. Angas or appendages) which explain the Veda.³

Duty to perform the five daily sacrifices (Panch Mahā Yajna)

Let him never if he is able to perform them neglect the five sacrifices (Panch Mahā Yajna) to the sages (Brahma Yajna), to the gods (Deva Yajna), to the Bhūtas (Bhuta Yajna), to men (Nara Yajna) and to the manes (Pitri Yajna).⁴

Duty to perform Daily Agnihotra (oblations to the sacred fire)

A Brahman shall always offer the Agnihotra (oblations to the sacrificial fire) at the beginning or at the end of the day and the night and the Darśna and Purnamasā and sacrifices at each new moon and full moon day of the month.⁵

Duty to receive and honour the guest

He shall next honour the guest by receiving him well at his house by offering him a seat food a couch, water or roots and fruits.⁶ A householder must give as much food as he is able to spare to those who do not cook for themselves and to all beings one must distribute food without detriment to one's own interest.⁷ He shall always be engaged in studying the Veda and such acts as are conducive to his welfare.⁸

Duty to beget a male child

He shall approach his wife in due season as laid down by the law until he begets a male child to discharge the debt that he owes to his deceased fathers.⁹ Let him never play with dice, nor eat lying on a bed.¹⁰

1. (4-15).	2. (4-16).	3. (4-19).	4. (4-21).	5. (4-25).
6. (4-29).	7. (4-32).	8. (4-35).	9. (4-45).	10. (4-74).

Non-association with outcasts and untouchables.

Let him not stay together with Patitas (i.e. outcasts) nor with chāndālas (a class of untouchables) nor with Pukkasas (another class of untouchables) nor with fools nor with overbearing men, nor with Antyas (i.e. low-caste men) nor with Antyavasāyins (a class of untouchables dwelling at the end of village).¹

Social uplift of Sudras by moral lessons

Let him not give to the Sūdra instructions in Veda and Shāstras, nor the remnants of his meal, nor food offered to the gods, nor let him explain the sacred law to such a man nor impose upon him a penance except through a Brāhman.² But he may give moral and religious instructions to Sūdras by reading Purānas and Itihāsas,³ as a Brāhman has the good of all at his heart. He is called the lover of all (Mātṛo Brāhmanaha).⁴ He who explains the sacred law to a Sūdra (from the Scriptures or Smritis) or dictates to him a penance (directly) will sink together with that man into the hell.⁵

Whose gifts not acceptable.

A Brāhman should not accept presents from a king who is not descended from the Kshatriya race nor from butchers, oil-manufacturers and publicans nor from those who subsist by the gain of prostitutes.⁶

Morning duties — the daily morning and evening prayers (sandhyā)

Let him wake in the Brāhmi Muhurta (i.e. about an hour or so before sun-rise) sacred to Brāhman and think of spiritual merit and wealth, of the bodily fatigue arising therefrom, and of the true meaning of the Veda.⁷ When he has risen, has relieved the necessities of nature and carefully purified himself, let him stand during the morning twilight, muttering for a long time the Gāyatrī and at the proper time, he must similarly perform the evening devotion.⁸ By prolonging the twilight devotions, the sages obtained long life, wisdom, honour, fame and excellence in Vedic knowledge.⁹

Religious injunction to study the Vedas

Let him recite the daily portion of the Mantṛas of the Veda, and study the Brāhmana and the Mantṛasamhitā.¹⁰ Let him avoid

1 (4-79)	2 (4-80)	3. (10-126, 127)	4 (2-87)	5. (4-81)
6. (4-84).	7 (4-92)	8. (4-93)	9. (4-94)	10 (4-100).

reading the Veda on certain days when the Vedn study is forbidden ¹ Let him never recite the Rig Veda or the Yajur Veda while the Saman melodies are heard ² The Rig Veda is declared sacred to the gods the Yajur Vedn to men and the Sāma Veda to the manes Hence the sound of the latter is impure as it were ³ Medhātithi explains that Sama Veda is not really impure, but when it is heard one must study the other Vedn just as in the presence of some impure thing or person

No disrespect to a learned Brāhman or a Kshatriya.

Let him never despise a kshatriya, a snuko and a learned Brahman as they may destroy him if treated with disrespect.⁴ Let him not despise himself on a count of former failures until death, let him seek fortune, nor despair of gaining it ⁵

Saying the truth but in a pleasing manner

Let him say what is true and what is pleasing let him utter no disagreeable truth, and let him utter no agreeable falsehood, that is the eternal law ⁶

Rules of good conduct purity and discipline

Let him eagerly follow the customs which are auspicious and the rule of good conduct, be careful of purity and control all his senses let him mutter prayers and untired offer daily oblations in the fire ⁷ Let him daily mutter the Veda at the proper time.⁸ By daily reciting the Veda by the observance of the rules of purification by practising austerities and by doing no injury to created beings, one obtains the faculty of remembering former births.⁹

Worship of the gods and their images

Early in the morning only after purification and bath let him worship the gods ¹⁰ But on the Purn days let him go to visit the images of the gods and virtuous Brahmins and the ruler of the country for the sake of protection as well as his Gurus (elders) ¹¹ Let him untired follow the conduct of virtuous men connected with his occupations.¹²

Due respect and honour to the teacher and elders

Let him never offend the teacher who initiated him, nor him who explained the Vedn nor his father and mother nor any other Guru, nor cows nor Brāhmins nor any men performing austerities.¹³

1. (4-101) 2 (4-123) 3 (4-124) 4 (4-135 6) 5 (4-137) 6 (4-138)
7.(4-145) 8 (4-147) 9 (4-148) 10 (4-152). 11.(4-153) 12.(4-155) 13.(4-162).

Denouncement of atheism.

Let him avoid atheism, cavilling at the Vedas, contempt of the gods, hatred, want of modesty, pride, anger and harshness.¹

The law of righteousness (Dharma) and unrighteousness (Adharma)

Let him though suffering in consequence of his righteousness (Dharma) never turn his heart to unrighteousness for he will see the speedy overthrow of unrighteous wicked men² Unrighteousness practised in this world, does not at once produce its fruit like a seed sown in the ground, but advancing slowly it cuts off the roots of him who committed it.³ If the punishment falls not on the offender himself, it falls on his sons, if not on the sons, then on his grandsons, but an iniquity once committed, never fails to produce fruit to him who wrought it.⁴ He prospers for a while through unrighteousness, then he gains good fortune, next he conquers his enemies, but at last he perishes root and branch⁵ Let him always delight in truthfulness, obedience to the sacred law, conduct worthy of an Āryan, and purity, let him chastise his pupils according to the sacred law, keeping his speech, arms and belly under control.⁶ Let him avoid the acquisition of wealth (Artha) and the gratification of his desires (Kāma) if they are opposed to the sacred law (Dharma) and even lawful acts which may cause pain in the future (e.g. excessive charities beyond means done for fame) or are offensive to men.⁷ Yājñavalkya also similarly says that one should perform religious rites carefully by deeds, mind, and words. One should not perform a religious rite (e.g. slaughter of animals in Madhu paka) which is censured by the people and which does not lead to the celestial region even if it is presented by the sacred law⁸ Let him walk in that path of holy men which his fathers and his grand fathers followed, while he walks in that, he will not suffer harm⁹

The law for the acceptance and rejection of a gift.

Without a full knowledge of the rules, prescribed by the sacred law for the acceptance of presents, a wise man should not

1. (4-163). 2 (4-171). 3 (4-172) 4 (4-173). 5. (4-174).
6 (4-175) 7. (4-176). 8. (Y. S 1-156). 9. (4-178).

take anything even though he may pine with hunger.¹ A Brahman who neither performs austerities nor studies the Veda yet delights in accepting gifts sinks with the donor into hell, just as he who attempts to cross over in a boat made of stone is submerged in the water.² Hence an ignorant man should be afraid of accepting any presents for by reason of a very small gift even a fool sinks into hell as a cow into a morass.³

Denouncement of hypocrisy

When one has committed a sin let him not perform a penance under the pretence that the act is intended to gain a spiritual merit, thus hiding his sin under the pretext of a vow and deceiving women and Sudras.⁴ Such Brahmins are repudiated after death and in this life by those who expound the Veda, and a vow performed under a false pretence goes to the Rakshasas (devils).⁵ He who without being a student (Brahma-hari) or an ascetic (Sanyāsi) gains his livelihood by wearing the dress of a student or an ascetic and keeps a big beard and curl of hairs etc. takes upon himself the guilt of all students and ascetics and is born again in the womb of an animal.⁶

Rules of moral conduct (Sadācāra) paramount to the rules of purity of conduct (Yama and Niyama)

Let him always bathe in rivers in ponds dug in honour of the gods in lakes, and in water-holes or springs.⁷ A wise man should constantly discharge the paramount duties called Yama (e.g. non-injury, truth, non-stealing, celibacy, mercy and control of senses etc.) and not rest satisfied merely with the observance of the minor rules of observances called (Niyamas) (e.g. bathing, purity, celebration of sacrifices and offering and performance of gifts, austerities, and penances etc.) for he who does not discharge the former but merely obeys the latter alone becomes an outcast.⁸ Yājñavalkya describes Yamas and Niyamas as follows: celibacy, mercy, forgiveness, charity, truthfulness, open-mindedness, abstention from injury, faith in sweetness of temper and restraint of the external senses are known as Yamas or rules of restraint⁹ while bathing, silence, fasting, celebration of sacrifices, Vedic study, control of sexual desire, service

of the preceptor, purity, absence of anger and vigilance are called *Niyamas* or religious observances.¹

Rules of interdiction as regards food.

Let him never eat food given by intoxicated, angry, or sick men,² nor that which has been touched by a menstruating woman, nor that which has been pecked at by birds or touched by a dog,³ nor food offered by hailots,⁴ nor food given by a thief, a carpenter, a usurer, and a miser,⁵ nor by one accused of a mortal sin, an unchaste woman, or a hypocrite, nor anything that has turned sour, nor what has been kept a whole night, nor the food of a Sūdra nor the leavings of another man,⁶ nor the food given by a physician, a hunter, a cruel man, one who eats the fragments of another's meal, nor that given by a woman whose ten days of impurity have not elapsed,⁷ nor that given without due respect nor that given by a female who is without a male relative nor that of an enemy nor that given by outcasts nor that on which any body has sneezed,⁸ nor the food given by one who habitually tells falsehoods, or by an actor, a tailor, or an ungrateful man;⁹ by a blacksmith, a Nishāda, (untouchable caste), a stage-player, a goldsmith, or a basket-maker,¹⁰ nor that given by a washerman or a dyer,¹¹ nor by those who in all matters are ruled by women, nor food given by men whose ten days of impurity on account of death of a relation have not passed, nor that which is unpalatable.¹² If he has unwittingly eaten the food of one of those persons, he must fast for 3 days, if he has eaten it intentionally, he must perform a Krichhīa penance.¹³ A Brāhman who knows the law, must not eat cooked food given by a Sūdra who performs no Shrādhhas; but on failure of other means of subsistence he may accept raw grain sufficient for one night and day.¹⁴

Constant Duty to offer sacrifices and gifts to acquire spiritual merit (Istā-Purtam).

Let him always offer sacrifices (*Ishtā*) and perform works of charity (*Purtam*) i.e. building wells, tanks and Dharmashālās or inns

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|----------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. (Y.S.3-314) | 2 (M.S.4-207) | 3 (4-208) | 4 (4-209) | 5. (4-210). |
| 6. (4-211). | 7. (4-212). | 8. (4-213). | 9 (4-214) | 10. (4-215) |
| 11. (4-216). | 12. (4-217) | 13 (4-222). | 14. (4-223). | |

etc) with faith for offerings and charitable works made with faith and with lawfully earned money, procure endless rewards¹ Let him always practice according to his ability, with a cheerful heart, the duty of liberality both by sacrifices (Ishin) and by charitable works (Purti) if he finds a worthy recipient (P'itin) for his gifts² If he is asked let him always give something, be it ever so little without grudging, for a worthy recipient will perhaps be found who saves him from all guilt or sin³ The gift of the Veda surpasses all other gifts, water food cows, land clothes muscumin gold, and clarified butter⁴ For whatever purpose a man bestows his gift for that same purpose he receives in his next birth with due honour its reward⁵ Both he who covetously receives a gift and he who respectfully bestows it, go to heaven in the contrary case they both fall into hell⁶ Let him not be proud of his austerities let him not utter a false word after he has offered a sacrifice let him not speak ill of Brâhmanas after he has offered a sacrifice, when he has bestowed a gift, let him not boast of it⁷

Spiritual merit (Dharma) as the only companion in the next world

Giving no pain to any creature let him slowly accumulate spiritual merit (Dharma) for the sake of acquiring a companion in the next world just as the white ant gradually raises its hill!⁸ Let him therefore always slowly accumulate spiritual merit (Dharma) in order that it may be his companion after death for with merit (Dharma) as his companion he will traverse a gloom difficult to traverse⁹ That companion (i.e. merit or Dharma) speedily conducts the man who is devoted to duty and effaces his sins by austerities to the next world, radiant and clothed with an ethereal body¹⁰

Elevation of the race by connection with excellent men and degradation by connection with low caste men

Let him who desires to raise his race, over form connections with the most excellent men and shun all low men¹¹ A Brâhman who always connects himself with the most excellent ones and shuns all inferior ones becomes most distinguished by an opposite conduct

1. (4-220). 2 (4-227). 3 (4-228). 4 (4-233). 5 (4-234). 6. (4-235).
7 (4-236) 8 (4-238). 9 (4-242). 10 (4-243). 11. (4-244).

he becomes a Sūdra.¹ He who describes himself to virtuous men in a manner contrary to truth, (e.g. where one who is immoral and irreligious pretends to be virtuous and religious) is the most sinful wretch in this world, he is thief who makes away with his own self.² He who is dishonest with respect to his speech, is dishonest in every thing.³

Time for retirement from the order of householder and embracing that of a hermit.

When he has paid, according to the law, his debts due to the great sages, to the manes, and to the gods, let him make over everything to his son and dwell in his house not caring for any worldly concerns.⁴ Alone let him constantly meditate in solitude on that which is salutary for his soul, for he who meditates in solitude attains supreme bliss.⁵ Thus have been declared the means by which a Brāhman householder must always subsist and the summary of the ordinances for a Snātaka which cause an increase of holiness and are praiseworthy.⁶ A Brāhman who being learned in the lore of the Vedas, conducts himself in this manner and daily destroys his sins, will be exalted in Brahman's world (Brahma-loka).⁷

(iii) Duties of a Hermit (Vānaprastha).

A twice born snātaka who has lived according to the law in the order of householders, may taking a firm resolution and keeping his senses in subjection, dwell in the forest (Vana), duly observing the rules laid down for a hermit as given below.⁸ When a householder sees his skin wrinkled, and his hair white, and the sons of his sons, then he may resort to the forest.⁹ The order of householders according to Manu is completed at the age of 50, when one is enjoined to retire from the life of a householder and enter into the order of a hermit (Vānaprastha) Abandoning all food raised by cultivation, and all his belongings, he may depart into the forest either committing his wife to his sons, or accompanied by her ¹⁰ Taking with him the sacred fire and the implements required for domestic sacrifices, he may go forth from the village into the forest and reside there, duly controlling his senses ¹¹ Let him offer those five great sacrifices (Panch

1 (4-245)	2 (4-255)	3 (4-256)	4 (4-257)	5. (4-258)
6. (4-259).	7 (4-260).	8. (6-1)	9. (6-2)	10. (6-3). 11. (6-4).

Mahā Yajña) according to the rule, with various kinds of pure food fit for ascetics or with herbs, roots, and fruit¹ Let him wear a skin or a tattered garment, let him bathe in the evening or in the morning and let him always wear his hair in braids the hair on his body, his beard and his nails being unclipped² Let him perform the bath offering with such food as he eats, and give alms according to his ability, let him honour those who come to his hermitage with alms consisting of water roots and fruit³ Let him be always industrious in privately reciting the Veda let him be patient of hardship friendly towards all of collected mind, ever liberal and never a receiver of gifts and compassionate towards all living creatures.⁴ Let him offer according to the law the Agnihotra with three sacred fires (i.e. Garhaspatya Āhavanīya and Dakṣiṇa fires) never emitting the new-moon and full moon sacrifices at the proper time⁵ With pure grains fit for ascetics, which grow in spring and in autumn, and which he himself has collected, let him severally prepare the sacrificial cakes (Purodāśha) and the boiled masses of food (chāru) as the law directs⁶ Having offered those most pure sacrificial viands, consisting of the produce of the forest, he may use the remainder for himself mixed with salt prepared by himself⁷ Let him eat vegetables that grow on dry land, or in water, flower roots and fruits, the productions of pure trees, and oils extracted from forest-fruits⁸ Let him avoid honey, flesh, and mushrooms growing on the ground⁹ Let him not eat anything grown on ploughed land nor roots and fruit grown in a village, though he may be tormented by hunger¹⁰ He may either eat at night only or in the day time only, or at every fourth meal-time or at every eighth¹¹ Or he may live according to the rule of the lunar practice (chāndrīyana) daily diminishing the quantity of food in the bright half of the month and increasing it in the dark half or he may eat on the last days of each fortnight once a day only boiled barley gruel.¹² Or he may constantly subsist on flowers, roots, and fruit alone, which have been ripened by time and have fallen spontaneously following

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| 1 (0-5). | 2 (6-6). | 3 (6-7) | 4 (6-8). | 5 (6-9) | 6 (6-11). |
| 7 (6-12) | 8. (0-13). | 9 (6-14) | 10 (6-16). | 11. (6-19). | 12 (0-20). |

the rule of the institutes of Vīkhanas.¹ Or let him either roll about on the ground, or stand during the day on tiptoe, or let him alternately stand and sit down.² In summer let him expose himself to the heat of five fires (Panchāgni tāpa), during the rainy season live under the open sky, and in winter be dressed in wet clothes, thus gradually increasing the rigour of his austerities.³ When he bathes at the three Savans (i.e. Sunrise, midday, and sunset), let him offer libations of water to the manes and the gods, and practising harsher and harsher austerities, let him dry up his body frame,⁴ making no effort to procure things that give pleasure, chaste, sleeping on the bare ground, not caring for any shelter, dwelling at the roots of trees.⁵ From Brāhmans who live as ascetics, let him receive alms barely sufficient to support life or from other householders of the twice-born castes who reside in the forest.⁶ Or the hermit who dwells in the forest may bring food from a village, receiving it either in a hollow dish of leaves, in his naked hand, or in a broken earthen dish, and may eat eight mouthfuls.⁷ These and other observances must a Brāhman who dwells in the forest diligently practise, and in order to attain complete union with the supreme soul, he must study the various sacred texts contained in the Upanishads.⁸ Or let him walk, fully determined and going straight on, in a north easterly direction, subsisting on water and air, until his body sinks to rest.⁹ A Brāhman, having got rid of his body by one of those modes practised by the great sages, is exalted in the world of Brahman, free from sorrow and fear.¹⁰

(iv) Duties of an ascetic (Sanyāsi).

The fourth and the last order of life is that of ascetic who has completely renounced his house, wife, children, wealth and everything. Having passed the third part of a man's natural term of life in the forest, (in accordance with the regulations laid down for the three orders of life) he may live as an ascetic during the fourth part of his existence, after abandoning all attachment to worldly objects.¹¹ He who after passing from order to order, after offering sacrifices and subduing his senses becomes tired with giving

1. (6-21).	2 (6-22)	3 (6-23)	4 (6-24).	5 (6-26)	6. (6-27)
7 (6-28)	8 (6-29)	9 (6-31)	10. (6-32).	11 (6-33)	

1. (1-31) 2. (6-75) 3. (1-15) 4. (1-3) 5. (10-35)

entitled to become an ascetic. One should therefore beware of impostor ascetics seen now a days in large numbers wandering about the streets, some of whom were born as Sūdras and not qualified to enter into the holy order. Worlds, radiant in brilliancy, become the portion of him who departs from his house as an ascetic, after giving a promise of safety (Abhaya) to all created beings¹. For that twice-born man, by whom not the smallest danger (Bhaya) is caused to created beings, there will be no danger from any quarter, after he is freed from his body². Departing from his house fully provided with the means of purification (e.g. the ascetic's staff water-pot etc.), let him wander about absolutely silent, and caring nothing for enjoyments that may be offered to him³. Let him always wander alone, without any companion, in order to attain final liberation, fully understanding that the solitary man who neither forsakes nor is forsaken, gains his end⁴. He shall neither possess a fire nor a dwelling, he may go to a village for his food; he shall be indifferent to every thing, firm of purpose, meditating and concentrating his mind on Brahman.⁵ A potshead instead of an alms-bowl, the roots of trees for a dwelling, coarse worn-out garments, life in solitude, and indifference towards everything, are the marks of one who has attained liberation.⁶ Let him not desire to die, let him not desire to live, let him wait for his appointed time as a servant waits for the payment of his wages.⁷ Let him utter speech purified by truth, let him keep his heart pure.⁸ Let him patiently bear hard words, let him not insult any body, and let him not become any body's enemy for the sake of this perishable body.⁹ Against an angry man, let him not in return show anger, let him bless when he is cursed, and let him not utter speech, devoid of truth.¹⁰ Delighting in what refers to the soul, sitting (in the postures (*Āsanas*) prescribed by the Yoga), independent of external help, entirely abstaining from sensual enjoyments, with himself for his only companion, he shall live in this world desiring the bliss of final liberation.¹¹ His hair, nails and beard being clipped, carrying alms-bowl, a staff and a water pot, let him continually

1 (6-39)	2. (6-40).	3 (6-41)	4 (6-42)	5. (6-43).	6. (6-44)
7 (6 45)	8 (6-46)	9. (6-47)	10. (6-48).	11. (6-49).	

wander about controlling him self and not hurting any creature¹ Let him go to bed every day let him not be eager to obtain a large quantity of alms, for an ascetic who eagerly seeks alms, attaches him self also to sensual enjoyments² When the people have finished their meal, when the remnants in the dishes have been removed let an ascetic always go to bed³ Let him not be sorry when he obtains nothing, nor rejoice when he obtains something, let him accept so much only as will sustain life⁴ By eating little and by standing and sitting in solitude let him restrain his senses, if they are attracted by a sensual object⁵ By the restraint of his senses by the destruction of love and hatred and by the abstention from injuring the creature, (Pur 7) he will come out for immortality⁶ Let him witness the transmigration of men caused by their sinful deeds on their falling into hell and on the torments in the world of Yama⁷ on the separation from their dear ones, on their union with hated men, on their being overpowered by age, and being tormented with disease on the departure of the individual soul from this body and its new birth in another womb and on its wandering through ten thousand millions of existence⁸ on the infliction of pain on embodied spirit which is caused by demerit, and the gain of eternal life which is caused by the attainment of their highest aim, gained through spiritual merit⁹ By deep meditation let him recognize the subtle nature of the supreme soul, and its presence in all organisms both the highest and the lowest¹² To whatever order he may be attached let him though blest with a want of the external marks, fulfil his duty equal-minded (Sama) towards all creatures for the external mark (Linga) of the order is not the cause of the acquisition of merit¹³ In order to preserve living creatures let him always by day and by night even with pain to his body walk, carefully scanning the ground¹⁴ In order to expiate the death of those creatures which he unintentionally injures by day or by night, an ascetic shall bathe and perform six suppressions of the breath (Prāṇāyāma)¹⁵ Three suppressions of the breath (Pranayama) even, performed according to the rule, and accompanied with the recitation of the vaṅkṛtis and of the syllable Om, one

1 (6-52). 2 (6-53). 3. (6-56). 4 (6-57) 5. (6-59) 6. (6-60). 7 (6-61).
8 (6-62) 9 (6-63) 10 (6-64) 11 (6-65). 12. (6-66) 13 (6-68). 14 (6-69)

must know to be the highest form of austerity for every Brāhman.¹ The taints of the sense organs are destroyed through the suppression of the breath.² Let him destroy the taints through suppression of the breath (*Prāṇāyāma*), the production of sin by fixed attention (*Dhāraṇā*), all sensual attachments (*Sansarga*) by restraining his senses and organs (*Pratyāhāra*) and all qualities that are not lordly by meditation (*Dhyāna*).³ Let him recognise by the practice of meditation (*Dhyāna Yoga*) the progress of the individual soul through beings of various kinds, a progress hard to understand for unregenerate men.⁴ He who possesses the true insight into the nature of the world, is not fettered by his deeds, but he who is destitute of that insight, is drawn into the circle of births and deaths.⁵ By not injuring any creatures (*Ahimsā*), by detaching the senses from objects of enjoyment, by performing the rites prescribed in the Veda, and by rigorously practising austerities, men gain that state even in this world.⁶ Let him quit this dwelling (i.e. body) composed of the five elements, where the bones are the beams, which is held together by tendons (instead) of cords, where the flesh and the blood are the mortar, which is thatched with the skin, which is foul-smelling, filled with urine and ordure, infested by old age and sorrow, the seat of disease, harassed by pain, gloomy with passion, and perishable.⁷ Making over the merit of his own good actions to his friends, and the guilt of his evil deeds to his enemies, he attains the eternal Brahman by the practice of meditation (*Dhyāna Yoga*).⁸ When by the disposition of his heart, he becomes indifferent to all objects, he obtains eternal happiness both in this world and after death.⁹ He who has in this manner gradually given up all attachments and is freed from all pairs of opposites, reposes in Brahman alone.¹⁰ All that has been declared above depends on meditation (*Dhyāna*) for he who is not proficient in the knowledge of that which refers to the soul reaps not the full reward of the performance of rites.¹¹ Let him constantly recite those texts of the Veda which refer to the sacrifice, those referring to the deities, and those which treat of the soul and are contained in the concluding portions of the Veda known as *Vedānta*.¹² That is the refuge of the ignorant, and even the refuge

1. (6-70) 2. (6-71) 3. (6-72) 4. (6-73) 5. (6-74) 6. (6-75).
 7. (6-76, 77). 8. (6-79). 9. (6-80) 10. (6-81) 11. (6-82). 12. (6-83).

of those who know the meaning of the Veda, that is the protection of those who feel bliss in heaven and of those who seek endless beatitude¹ A twice-born man who becomes an ascetic, after the successive performance of the above mentioned acts, shakes off sin here below and reaches the highest Brahman² Thus the law valid for self-restrained ascetics has been explained³

(v) General observations on the four orders of life

The student, the householder the hermit and the ascetic, these constitute four separate orders, which all spring from the order of householders⁴ But all or even any of these orders assumed successively in accordance with the institutes of the sacred law, lead the Brāhmin who acts by the preceding rules to the highest state⁵ In accordance with the precepts of the Veda and of the Smṛiti the householder is declared to be superior to all of them for he supports the other three⁶ Manu then enunciates the tenfold law for the twice-born men belonging to any of these four orders and they are enjoined to carefully obey the same⁷ Contentment, forgiveness self-control abstention from unrighteously appropriating anything obedience to the rules of purification restraint of the senses, wisdom, knowledge of the supreme soul truthfulness and abstention from anger, these form the tenfold law⁸ These Brāhmins who thoroughly study the tenfold law and after studying obey it, enter the highest state⁹ A twice-born man who with collected mind, follows the tenfold law and has paid his three debts may, after learning the Vedānta according to the prescribed rule, become an ascetic¹⁰ Having given up the performance of all rites throwing off the guilt of his sinful acts subduing his senses and having studied the Veda, he may live at his ease under the protection of his son¹¹ He who has thus given up the performance of all rites, who is solely intent on his own particular object and free from desires, destroys his guilt by his renunciation and obtains the highest state¹² This four fold holy law of Brāhmanas yields after death imperishable rewards¹³ The institution of the four orders of life (*Āśramas*) which had its origin in the Vedas and Brāhmanas and was definitely established

1 (6-84) 2 (6-85) 3 (6-86) 4 (6-87) 5 (6-88) 6 (6-89) 7 (6-91).
8 (6-92) 9 (6-93) 10 (6-94) 11 (6-95) 12 (6-96) 13 (6-97).

in the time of the Upanishads,¹ was meant for the moral and spiritual elevation of an individual by slow degrees and gradations just as the institution of caste (*Varna*) was meant for the good and all-round elevation of society as a whole. The order of life of a student (*Brahmacharya*) was preparatory to that of a householder (*Grihastha*), the life of a householder to the life of an anchorite (*Vānprastha*) and the life of an anchorite was preparatory to that of an ascetic (*Sanyāsi*) which was the last and the highest stage. The highest end of a man's life was liberation and spiritual beatitude which could not be achieved unless he first passed through a life of discipline and self-restraint and observed the rules and restrictions relating to the institutions of caste and the four orders of life (*Varnāshrama*) as means to the highest end of self-realisation. An allround development and experience of life had to be gained by every one by going through the four stages into which human life was divided to enable him to reach perfection by leading a pure and moral life which ultimately brought about a stage of liberation and emancipation through perfect knowledge. The divisions of life into four periods was in consonance with natural development. The first period was the period of training and discipline which was necessary to mould the plastic youth to a life of duty. The teacher exacted a rigorous observance of the vow of celibacy (*Brahmacharya*) on the part of the student. The rules of studentship are found in the Atharvaveda where the importance of *Brahmacharya* (life of celibacy) is highly praised.² As the principal occupations of a *Brāhman* were studying and teaching, the life of a *Brahmachāri* (student) came to be regarded as an ideal for even ex-student householders. The second period of life viz the life of a householder (*Grihastha*) was marked by the entrance of the student on completing his studies into the life of a householder by marriage which took place generally at the age of 25. Monastic tendencies were discouraged in the Hindu system of life unlike the two new religions of Buddhism and Jainism which laid too much stress on extreme asceticism. "In Hindu religion there is nothing unwholesome about sex life." Even the Hindu Scriptures enjoined the student on completing his studies to marry a wife and continue the lineage.³

1. (A. V. S 11-5, 11-3-6, 9, Ch U 2-23-1, B. U 2-4-6)

2. (A. V. S 11-5, 11-3-6, 9). 3 (T. U. 1-11-1).

Rudhākṛṣṇa in that connection also says that 'Marriage was recognised as a necessary means of spiritual growth. Even the gods of the Hindus were married, each god having his own consort. Thus god Siva is Ardhanarishvara (his consort Ura constituting half of his life body). His image signifies the co-operative interdependent separated but jointly complete masculine and feminine functions of the supreme being.¹ The third stage viz. the stage of an anchorite (*Tyāgī*) arises when the responsibilities of married life are fulfilled and the householder leaves his house and children and goes to the forest either alone or with his wife if she consents to accompany him. It may be mentioned here that according to Manu the householder was not allowed to abandon his wife, children and home and go to the forest to embrace the life of an anchorite unless he was sufficiently old and his skin began to show wrinkles or his hair turned grey and he became a grand father having 2 sons and sons-in-law.² The main object of this stage was to escape from the bustle of life into the solitude of the forest to meditate on the higher problems of metaphysics and spiritual science. The last stage of life was that of a monk or ascetic (*Sannyāsi*) who completely renounced all ties of home and society including family, country, nation and even the world which would not satisfy the spiritual aspirations of the soul in such a person who is not tempted by riches or honour nor is he elated by success or dejected by failure. He develops a spirit of equanimity and bears patiently improper words and does not insult any one; he does not hate any one nor does he become any one's enemy for the sake of his perishable body.³ The whole world is as it were a family to such a saint who has embraced the monastic order and who is above petty considerations. Even patriotism is not enough for such persons. They look upon all men and societies as partaking of the spirit of Godhead irrespective of all questions of caste, creed, sect, race or even nationality. Their love is universal and does not savour of any partiality or hatred for any particular person, sect or society. Sir Rudhākṛṣṇa sums up the matter as follows: 'While some forms of Christianity and Buddhism judge the life of the world to be inferior to the life of the monk

1 (Hindu View of Life by Sir Rudhākṛṣṇa).

2 (M. S. 6-2).

3. (M. S. 6-47).

and would have loved to place the whole of mankind at one swoop in cloister, Hinduism while appreciating the life of a Sanyāsin (ascetic) refrained from condemning the state of the householder. Every state is necessary and in so far as it is necessary it is good. The blossom does not deny the leaf and the leaf does not deny the stalk and the stalk the root. The general rule is that we should pass from stage to stage gradually. The liberated soul is not indifferent to the welfare of the world. Renunciation is the surrendering of the notions of 'I' and 'mine' and not the giving up of the work enjoined by the scriptures¹. It is related of Buddha that when he was on the threshold of *Nirvān* he turned away and took the vow never to cross it so long as a single being remained subject to sorrow and suffering. The same idea comes out in the sublime verse of the Bhāḡwat Purān². There it is stated about king Rantideva that he did not pray to God for lordly power as king or for liberation but he prayed that he could participate in the miseries suffered by all creatures by staying with them and thus alleviate their suffering³.

(10) Rules and restrictions about food and drink.

(i) Rules based on express texts, old traditions and principles of hygiene.

The rules and restrictions laid down by the lawgivers about food and drink are based on express texts in the Scriptures, the Gītā and old traditions. Thus it is stated in the Chhāndogya Upanishad that "by the purity of his aliment one becomes purified in his nature; by the purification of his nature, his memory becomes firm and by the attainment of memory all the attachments of his body are loosened"⁴. Similarly drinking of wine was also considered sinful.⁵ The rules and restrictions about food and drink etc framed by the law givers were based on rules of hygiene and science and were obviously meant to preserve the purity physical as well as intellectual as well as culture of the Āryans. It is also taught by our Lord in the Bhagwat Gītā that a man's character depends on the quality of the food taken by him which is threefold i.e. Sāttvic (pure) Rājasic (causing pain) and Tāmasic (impure)⁶.

1. (Medhātithi on Manu 6-32)
View of life by Śrī Rādhākṛṣṇa).

2. (Bh. P. 9-21-12 cited in the Hindu

3. (Ch. U. 7-26-2).

4. (Ch. U. 5-11-5)

5. (B. G. 17-7 to 10)

(ii) Lawful and forbidden food and drink.

Manu has laid down the following rules about lawful and forbidden food. Thus he says "Through neglect of the Veda-study, through deviation from the rule of conduct through remissness and through faults committed by eating forbidden food death becomes eager to shorten the lives of Brāhmanas."¹ Garlic, leeks and onions, mushrooms and all plants springing from impure substances are unfit to be eaten by the twice-born.² Rice boiled with sesamum, wheat mixed with butter, milk and sugar milk rice and flour cakes which are not prepared for a sacrifice and meat which has not been sprinkled with water while sacred texts were recited and food offered to the gods (*Nauvedya*) and sacrificial Viands must not be eaten before the offering has been made.³ Remnants only of the offerings made to the gods were to be eaten. The milk of a cow or other female animal within 10 days after her calving that of camels, of one hooved animals, of sheep of a cow in heat or of one that has no calf with her, and the milk of all wild animals excepting buffalo-cows that of women and all substances turned sour must be avoided except sour milk etc.⁴ A twice-born man who knowingly eats mushrooms, garlic, onions or leeks will become an outcast.⁵ As regards the taking of spirituous liquor it is declared a great sin (*Mahā-pātaka*) by the ancient law-givers and put on a level with the murder of a Brahman and as such it is totally interdicted.⁶ *Surā* or wine is the dirty refuge (*Mala*) of grain sin is also called dirt (*Mala*) hence a twice-born person shall not drink *surā*.⁷ When a Brahman even once only is deluged with spirituous liquor, his Brāhmanhood forsakes him and he becomes a Sudra.⁸ A twice-born person who has intentionally drunk through delusion of mind the spirituous liquor called *surā*, he shall drink that liquor boiling hot when his body has been completely scalded by that he is free from the guilt.⁹ Or he may drink cows urine water milk clarified butter, or liquid cow-dung boiling hot until he dies.¹⁰ If he has unintentionally drunk *surā*, he may eat during a year once a day at night grains of rice or oil-cake wearing clothes of cow-hair and his own hair in braids and carrying a wine cup as a flag.¹¹

1. (M 8 5-4). 2. (5-5) 3. (5 7) 4. (5-8 9 10) 5. (5-19). 6. (G D S. 21-1 V D S 1-19 20) 7. (11-94) 8. (11-98). 9. (11-91) 10. (11-92), 11. (11-93).

If a person partakes of any interdicted food or drink he shall perform a penance¹ Once a year a Brāhman must perform a Krichhīa penance in order to atone for unintentionally eating forbidden food, but for intentionally eating forbidden food, he must perform the penances specially prescribed therefor² The following further restrictions were laid down in the Dharma Shāstras as regards the discrimination of food articles in conformity with the rules of modern science and ideas of cleanliness "Food touched by a Brāhman or other high caste person who is impure, become impure but not unfit for eating. But what has been brought by an impure Sūdra must not be eaten, nor that food in which there is a hair or any other unclean substance nor must that food be eaten which has been touched with an unclean substance e.g. garlic; nor that in which an insect living on impure substances is found, nor that in which excrements or limbs of a mouse are found, nor that which has been touched by the foot, nor what has been touched with or brought in the hem of a garment, nor what has been looked at (or touched by) a dog or an Apapātra (i.e. a chāndāla and a fallen person), nor what has been brought at night by a female slave (Dāsī)."³ "If during his meal a Sūdra touches him, then he shall leave off eating. Nor shall he eat sitting in the same row with unworthy people nor shall he eat sitting in the same row with persons amongst whom one while they eat, rises and gives his leavings to his pupils or sips water He shall not eat food which has been bought or obtained ready-prepared in the market, nor shall he eat flavoured food bought in the market excepting raw meat, honey and salt. Oil and clarified butter bought in the market, he may use after having sprinkled them with water Prepared food which has stood for a night must neither be eaten nor drunk, nor should prepared food that has turned sour All intoxicating drinks are forbidden. Likewise the milk of cows, buffaloes, or she-goats during the first ten days after their giving birth to young ones Likewise food mixed with herbs which serve for preparing intoxicating liquors, and garlics, onions, and leeks. Mushrooms ought not to be eaten, that has been declared in a Brāhmaṇa, nor the meat of one-hoofed animals, of camels, of the Gayal, of village pigs, of Sarabhas

1 (5-20) 2. (5-21). 3. (A. D. S. 1-5-16-21 to 32).

and of cattle × × Among birds that scratch with their feet for food, the tame cock must not be eaten carnivorous birds are forbidden. Among fishes, the cheta ought not to be eaten, nor the snake-headed fish nor the alligator nor those which live on flesh only nor those which are misshaped like mermen"¹ 'Eating the flesh of forbidden creatures as of a dog village cooks or pigs (who are known for their filthy feeding) makes men impure Lakewise eating what is left by Sudra, some declare that these acts also canse a man to lose his caste"²

(iii) Rules for and against flesh eating

Mann has given permission to eat flesh of animals on certain occasions only and not at all times Thus he says One may eat flesh when it has been sprinkled with water (*Prokshita*) while Mantras are recited, when Brahmanas desire one doing it, when one is engaged in the performance of a rite according to the law and when ones life is in danger³ Manu allows permission to eat flesh for the purpose of honouring gods and manes at sacrifices and *Shraddhas* respectively and he who eats meat on those occasions commits no sin But to persist in using it on other occasions is said to be a proceeding worthy of Rakshasas (Devils)"⁴ A twice-born man who knows the law must not eat meat except in conformity with the law for if he has eaten it unlawfully, he will, being unable to save himself, be eaten after death by Victims⁵ A Brāhman must never eat the flesh of animals unhallowed by Mantras but obedient to the primeval law he may eat it consecrated with Vedic texts⁶ If he has a strong desire for meat he may make an animal of clarified butter, or one of flour and eat that but let him never seek to destroy an animal without a lawful reason⁷ Manu defends flesh-eating for the sake of sacrifices. Thus he says. "The self-existent (*Svayambhū*) himself created animals for the sake of sacrifices sacrifices have been instituted for the good of this whole world hence slaughtering of beasts for sacrifices is not slaughtering in the ordinary sense of the word⁸ Herbs, trees cattle, birds, and other animals that have been destroyed for sacrifices receive (being reborn)

1 (A.D.S. 1-5-17-1 to 39) V.D.S. 14(1 to 48). 2 (A.D.S. 1-7-21 14 to 18).
3. (5-27). 4 (5 31 32) 5 (5-33) 6 (5-36) 7 (5-37). 8. (5-39).

higher existences ¹ A twice-born man who, knowing the true meaning of the Veda slays an animal for the sacred purposes of religion causes both himself and the animal to enter a most blessed state.² But a twice-born man of virtuous disposition must never even in times of distress cause an injury to any creature which is not sanctioned by the Veda ³ He who injures innoxious beings from a wish to give himself pleasure never finds happiness, neither living nor dead.⁴ Meat can never be obtained without injury to living creatures, and injury to sentient beings is detrimental to the attainment of heavenly bliss. Let him therefore shun the use of meat.⁵ There is no greater sinner than that man who though not worshipping the gods or the manes seeks to increase the bulk of his own flesh by the flesh of other beings ⁶ He who during a hundred years annually offers a horse sacrifice, and he who entirely abstains from meat, obtains the same reward for their meritorious conduct.⁷ "Me he (*Māmsah*) will devour in the next world, whose flesh I eat in this life, the wise declare this to be the real meaning of the word flesh (*Māmsah*) ⁸

(iv) Lawful and forbidden flesh.

Manu first lays down a general rule that, 'a man shall not eat the flesh of five-toed (*Panch nakhā*) animals,⁹ e.g. monkeys, jackals etc. except the porcupine, the hedgehog, the iguana, the rhinoceros, the tortoise and the hare whose flesh is declared to be eatable as also that of those domestic animals that have teeth in one jaw only excepting camels.¹⁰ Manu prohibits the eating of flesh of the following birds and animals viz, all carnivorous birds and one-hoofed animals which are not specially permitted to be eaten as also that of sparrow, village-cock, crane, wood-pecker, parrot, village pigs, and all kinds of fishes".¹¹ He further interdicts the eating of flesh from a slaughter house and dried meat ¹² Āpastambha interdicts the eating of the flesh of a dog, village cocks or pigs and carnivorous animals ¹³

(v) Origin of the practice of flesh-eating and subsequent restrictions

Prof. N. K. Dutt makes the following observations about the origin of the practice of flesh eating in early times and the subse-

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|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1. (5-40). | 2. (5-42). | 3. (5-43) | 4. (5-45) | 5. (5-48) | 6. (5-52) |
| 7. (5-53) | 8. (5-55). | 9. (5-17) | 10. (5-18) | 11. (5-11, 12. 14). | |
| 12. (5-13). | 13. (A. D. S. 1-7-21-14, 15). | | | | |

quent restrictions relating thereto. Thus he says "The Rig Vedic people including Brahmins, were fond of meat-eating and practically all the important ceremonies and sacrifices were attended with slaughter of animals. The principle of *Ahimsa* or non-injury to animals was then unknown to the Rishis. Offerings of flesh were frequently made to the gods and the worshippers including the priests ate the offerings. Thus Agni is described as "fed on ox" ¹ "Indra will eat thy Bulls" ² Horse sacrifice is also described in the Rig Veda ³ The custom of entertaining a distinguished guest with the meat of a bull as we find in the time of the Brahmanas ⁴ must have been in existence in the time of the Rig Veda. Thus at wedding ceremonies "Oxen were slain" evidently for the feeding of the invited guests ⁵ From the Brahmanas, we learn that the sage Agastya slaughtered one hundred bulls at a sacrifice ⁶ Yājñavalkya, the greatest sage and philosopher of his time, was fond of eating the flesh of bullocks if it was tender ⁷ The custom about flesh-eating has been followed more freely in Bengal till to-day than in other parts of India and particularly in Gujarat where the people were influenced more by the lessons of *Ahimsa* as preached by the Jainas and the Vaishnavas who had made their stronghold in Gujarat. Animal sacrifices died away in course of time and the people in general were advocates of vegetarian diet since the time of the Sutra writers, down to the present time.

(vi) General public feeling against cow-slaughter from the earliest times

The cow was the most important domesticated animal for a long time. It not only provided them with milk, curds, butter, ghee etc. but the ox drew their carriages and was very useful in ploughing fields of pasture. There was a luxuriant growth of cows in early times and the cow was the standard of wealth in those days. He who possessed the largest number of cows was considered rich. The Āryans in the Rig Vedic times were conscious of the usefulness of the cow not only as a giver of milk and its valuable products but also as a medium of exchange and they were therefore

1. (R. V. 8-43-11). 2. (R. V. 10-86-13). 3. (R. V. 1-16-2). 4. (S. B. 8-4-1-2, A. B. 1-3-4). 5. (R. V. 10-85-13). 6. (T. B. 2-7-11-1, P. B. 21-14-5). 7. (S. B. 8-1-2-21).

reluctant to make an indiscriminate destruction of this useful animal Prof. N K Dutta makes the following observations in this connection "The name *aghnya* (ie not to be slain) was sometimes given to the cow in the Rig Veda and some sanctity was then attached to her" The reverence for cows which had its origin so far back as in the time of the Rig Veda, further increased since the spread of the 2 new religions, Buddhism and Jainism. Thus Gautama Buddha preached "Like unto a mother, a father, a brother and other relatives, the cows are our best friends, in which medicines are produced They give food and they give strength, they likewise give a good complexion and happiness, knowing the real state of this, the good Brāhmans of old did not kill cows" At present there is a strong religious sentiment among the Hindu community in general including the Āiṇya Samājists and the Mahāsabhites and particularly among the Jains against cow-slaughter which has not only the support of the Hindu scriptures and shāstras but which derives further support from the difficulty of obtaining fresh and pure milk, butter and ghee in the absence of increase in the of milch-cows due to economic stress and the large prevalence of the practice of cow-slaughter at present. The following passage from the Rig Veda will give the reader an idea as to what high veneration was paid to the cow in those times Thus it is stated "The mother of the Rudras, daughter of the Vasus, centre of nectar, sister of the Ādityas, to folk who understand, I will proclaim it injure not *Aditi* (not to be killed), the cow, the sinless"¹ In fact, the beginning of such tender feeling for the cow can be traced to Indo-Irānian times as observed by Prof. Macdonell in his History of Sanskrit Literature, as follows "The cow is the animal which figures most largely in the Rig Veda This is undoubtedly due to the important position resulting from its pre-eminent utility, occupied by this animal even in the remotest period of Indian life. × × × That this animal already possessed a sacred character is shown by the fact that one Rishi addresses a cow as *Aditi* and a goddess impressing upon his hearers that she should not be slain *Aghnya* (not to be killed), a frequent designation of the cow in the Rig Veda, points in the same direction Indeed the evidence of the *Avesta* proves that the sanctity of this animal goes back even to the Indo-Irānian period.

1. (R. V. 8-90-15).

In the Atharvaveda the worship of the cow is fully recognised while the Satpatha Brāhmaṇa emphasises the evil consequences of eating beef. The sanctity of cow has not only survived in India down to the present day but has even gathered strength with the lapse of time. The part played by the greased cartridges in the Indian Mutiny is sufficient to prove this statement. To no other animal has mankind owed so much and the debt has been richly repaid in India with a veneration unknown in other lands. So important a factor has the cow proved in Indian life and thought, that an exhaustive account of her influence from the earliest times would form a noteworthy chapter in the history of civilisation."

(vii) Determination of the legal position as regards flesh eating

Manu has given permission to eat flesh in the following cases only viz., "(1) when it has been sprinkled with water, consecrated with Mantras for sacrificial purposes (2) when Brāhmins desire one's doing it (3) when one is invited at religious rites (whether in honour of the gods or manes) and (4) when one's life is in danger"¹ Manu has allowed slaughter of animals at the ceremony of Madhuparka or the honey mixture given to a guest at Vedic sacrifices and at the rites in honour of the manes (Shraddha).² In fact this was an old practice which was widely prevalent in Vedic times when animal sacrifices into the sacred fire were in vogue. But in course of time after the rise of Buddhism and Jainism the above practice died away and animal sacrifices were replaced by sacrifices of burnt offerings of vegetables (Pāka Yajna) clarified butter, milk and so on. In fact, the Sūtra writers had relaxed the rule. In particular Āśvalāyana in his Gṛhya Sūtras has laid down by reference to Mantras quoted from the Rig Veda that knowledge of the Veda and worship of the gods is equivalent to a real sacrifice and even by learning only satisfaction is produced in the gods that adoration verily is sacrifice thus runs a Brāhmaṇa.³ The practice however of offering flesh to a guest at the Madhuparka ceremony was discontinued. Thus Śāṅkhāyana says Should any of the six persons mentioned in the Śrautasūtra viz. the teacher officiating priest, the father-in-law a king, Snātaka (the student

1 (6-27). 2 (5-41). 3 (A. G. B. 1-1-4).

who has completed his Vedic studies and bathed) and a friend, to whom the Arghya reception is due, visit him, let him offer flesh or what sort of food he thinks most like thereto.”¹ Further on he says “At the Madhupaika (Reception ceremony of a guest) and at the soma sacrifice, at the sacred rites for deceased fathers (manes) and gods, only animals should be sacrificed not elsewhere, thus Manu has said.”² It will be thus seen from the above that offering of flesh at the Madhupaika was optional (*Vikalpa*) and not obligatory as laid down by the Sūtra writers. Therefore the rule is not mandatory (*Niyama Vidhi*) but is optional and a *Parisankhyā* (a negative rule) and one is under no obligation to offer flesh on the said occasion. The same rule would apply to the desire of Brāhmins for flesh. But as regards the use of flesh at sacrifices and Shradddhas, in honour of gods and manes respectively, the rule is not uniform. There are 2 different opinions given by the Mīmāṃsakas and commentators. The Mīmāṃsakas relying on the Sūtras of Jaimini which enjoined the slaughter of animals and the offer of their separate limbs into the fire at the Vedic sacrifices such as Agni-Soma sacrifice and so on,³ pronounced the opinion that killing of animals at sacrifices amounted to an injunction (*Niyama Vidhi*). Similarly Medhātithi, Kulluka, Govindīāja, and some other commentators of Manu also have interpreted the rule about killing of animals at sacrifices as an injunction (*Niyama Vidhi*), and not as an optional or negative rule (*Parisankhyā*). On the other hand some other commentators on Manu and philosophers as the Sāṅkhyas and so on have interpreted the above rule as *Parisankhyā*, so that the rule laid down in Manu is intended to teach only that one should not eat flesh on any other occasion than when it is sprinkled for sacrificial purposes and it was not obligatory for one to eat flesh even on those occasions as flesh eating is accompanied with some faults, and he need not therefore eat flesh. This view is further supported by other Smritis as also the Upanishads which all preach the doctrine of non-slaughter (*Ahimsā*) of animals. Manu further says, “There is no sin in eating flesh (in sacrifice), in drinking spirituous liquor (at Sautramani sacrifice) and in conjugal intercourse with one’s wife (at the time of Ritu or season regulated

1. (S G S 2-15-1, A. G. S. 1-24-1 to 7, 33) 2. (S G. S. 2-16-1).

3. (J S 2-2-17, 10-7-2, 3).

by law) for that is the natural way of created beings, but abstention of these things brings great rewards as fruit.¹ This verse is construed by the commentators to mean that though no sin attached to eating flesh of fire-toed animals which are not intended by the lawgivers, drink of wine on the part of Kshatriyas, and conjugal intercourse with a wife even in the period which is not the proper season as regulated by the lawgivers yet a man derives a great religious merit by way of reward by abstaining from these things. By laying down the above regulations and restrictions on flesh eating and sexual relations Manu has exercised a healthy control and check on the natural impulses of man. For the Kali age however flesh-eating at Madhuparka was interdicted along with other practices such as inter-caste marriage, Nivoga and so on as stated in Brihanniradaya and Āditya Purāṇas and in Kṛtīsmṛiti.

Summary

The legal position on the subject of flesh eating may be summarised as follows (1) The rule about eating of flesh amounts to an injunction (*Niyama-Iddhi*) only in 3 cases viz. at sacrifices, Shrāddhas and when one's life is in danger for want of food (2) But the permission to eat flesh on the occasion of reception of guests (Madhuparka) and at the desire of Brahmins is not an injunction (*Ayama-Iddhi*) but it amounts to a *Parivandh* i.e. a negative rule of permission only (3) In general, abstention from flesh eating conduces to a high religious merit (4) By a long continued usage extending over several generations past flesh-eating has been totally discontinued by the high-caste Hindus (excepting a few castes and it is even censured by them as a blameworthy act. Therefore a new rule prohibiting flesh-eating is now definitely established which is binding on all as stated by the sage Yājñavalkya² to which Mitakshara adds a gloss that no one should slaughter animals at Madhuparka as the practice has totally fallen into disrepute.

(viii) Relaxation of the rules and restrictions as to diet in the Kali Age

Purusa first lays down a general rule that a Brahman may at the rites in honour of gods and manes always eat with immunity, in the house of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas clean in their body and

spirit and devoted to the performance of religious rites.¹ But he interdicts the taking of cooked food on the part of a Brāhman in the house of a Sūdra and prescribes a penance for a transgression of the rule in distressed time² He further says "Rice, oil, milk, or any other kind of raw edible substance come from the house of a Sūdra and cooked in the house of a Brāhman becomes fit to be eaten by a Brāhman in accordance with the injunction of Manu³ Both Manu and Yājñavalkya prohibit a twice-born from eating the cooked food of Sūdras except in distressed times⁴

(ix) Relaxation of restrictions as to diet in distressed times.

To meet the exigencies of distressed times, when a Brāhman is unable to procure food in the house of the twice born, Pārāsara permits him to accept from a Sūdra, clarified butter, oil, milk, treacle and articles of confectionery cooked in oil which the Brāhman is allowed to eat at the bank of a river⁵ Pārāsara further allows a Brāhman, permission to eat cooked food of the following persons among the Sūdras viz, his servant, barber, cow-herd, family friend, and his labourer in tillage⁶ This would however apply only to distressed times as would appear from the preceding verse wherein Pārāsara says "Repentance purifies a Brāhman that takes boiled rice in the house of a Sūdra during the time of distress or a hundred repetition of the Gāyatri Mantra is the expiation for his sin under the circumstance."⁷ Manu also makes a similar exception in the case of certain Sūdras whose cooked food a Brāhman is allowed to eat with impunity in distressed times Thus he says "A Brāhman who knows the law must not eat cooked food given by Sūdra who performs no Srāddha, but on failure of other means of subsistence, he may accept raw grain, sufficient for one night and day"⁸ Further on, he says that "a Brāhman may eat the food of the following persons among the Sūdras viz, his labourer in tillage, his family friend, his cow-herd, his family servant and his barber"⁹ A similar rule is also to be found in Yājñavalkya¹⁰ But this rule only applied to distressed times and it no longer holds good now. The rule did not apply to normal times when a man could get food from a twice-born person as is made clear by Āpastambha who lays down the

1 (PS 11-12) 2. (PS 11-19). 3 (PS.11-18) 4. (MS. 4-223, YS. 1-160)
5.(PS 11-13) 6 (PS 11-20) 7. (PS.11-19). 8 (4-223). 9.(4-253). 10.(Y.S.1-168).

following rules in the matter. Thus he says 'According to some (e.g. Gotama),¹ food offered by people of any caste who follow the laws prescribed for them except that of Sudras may be eaten. In times of distress even the food of a Sudra, who lives under one's protection for the sake of spiritual merit may be eaten. He may eat it after having touched it once with gold or with fire. He shall leave it when he obtains a lawful livelihood.'² Gotama also similarly observes "If the means for sustaining life cannot be procured otherwise, food may be accepted from a Sudra."³ When the life of a man is in danger for want of food he may eat any food and from any person to save his life. An express rule to this effect is laid down in the Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana.⁴ It appears from the Mahābhārata that the sage Viśvamitra took dogs' flesh from the house of a *chandāla* (the lowest caste of untouchables) to save his life in a fierce famine when no food could be had anywhere. The reader will see from the above that the rules in the Hindu Dharma Śāstras were not rigid but were elastic enough to adapt the law to changed circumstances in case of a real need (*Āpat-kāla*). But this concession was strictly limited to the demands of actual necessity only and not extended beyond as would appear from an interesting episode in the Chhāndogya Upanishad⁵ which is reproduced here for information of the reader. The said episode runs as follows: "When the Kāruś had been destroyed by hail-stones Uśastīhākrayana (a Brāhmaṇa) lived as a beggar with his virgin wife at the Ibhyāgrama village which was inhabited by an elephant-driver, (not belonging to the three twice-born castes) seeing the latter eating beans, Uśastī begged of him for food. The elephant-driver said 'I have no more except these beans which are put away as remnants of my eating here.' Uśastī said 'Give me of the same to eat. He gave him the beans and said 'There is something to drink also.' Then Uśastī said 'If I were to drink of it, I would be drinking the remnant of another's drink. The elephant-driver alluding to the beans retorted 'Were not these beans only left over and therefore unclean?' No he replied 'For I should not have lived

1 (G. D. S. 17-1). 2 (A. D. S. 1-6-18-13 to 15). 3 (G. D. S. 17-5).

4. (V. S. 3-4-28). 5 (Ch. U. 1-10-1 to 4).

if I had not eaten them, but the drinking of water I can command at pleasure by getting water anywhere'."

(ii) Rules and regulations regarding purity and defilement by touch etc.

(i) Regulations regarding purity of conduct (*Shauchāchāra*) an integral part of the Hindu religion.

Shaucha or purity has been defined by Atri as consisting of renunciation of forbidden food, association with those who are not badly spoken of and abiding by good conduct.¹ Regulations relating to purity of conduct, defilement by touch of interdicted things and persons and impurity were parts and parcels of the Hindu religion which derived their sanction from the *Bṛāhmanas* attached to the different Vedas. Thus the householder who was initiated to the fire sacrifice (*Agnihotra*) and other *Shrauta* (Vedic) sacrifices mentioned in the *Bṛāhmanas*, was enjoined to observe rules of purity laid down therein most faithfully and scrupulously and any infraction of the said rules required the performance of penances on the part of the person guilty of such infraction. The person performing Vedic sacrifices was enjoined to take a bath, avoid touch of certain interdicted articles and persons and intercourse with the latter, to sip water and observe certain other regulations regarding purity of conduct as laid down in the sacred lore. The *Dharma Shāstras* abound in detailed rules and regulations regarding purity and defilement by touch, impurity etc., which are mostly based on the *Bṛāhmanas*. Regulations regarding purity of conduct (*Shauchāchāra*) engaged the attention of the law-givers equally as those relating to righteous conduct (*Sadāchāra*) and the social order of the 4 castes and the four orders of life known as (*Varnāshrama Dharma*). These regulations constituted the *Sanātana Dharma* or the traditional religion of the *Āryans* and they are still followed in almost the same form by the large bulk of the orthodox Hindu populace of India descended from the illustrious *Āryan* race of hoary antiquity. With these facts, to deny on the part of any one that there are any rules and regulations in the Hindu religion regarding untouchability as practised in India to-day betrays a colossal ignorance of even the rudimentary elements

1. (At. S. 35).

of Hindu religion on the part of the person making such denial. These rules were mostly based on principles of hygiene and evidently framed to preserve the racial purity and high culture and civilisation of the Āryans and they subverted the important purpose of giving a preliminary training to the people so as to enable them to acquire good and pure habits, and lead a well disciplined life of self restraint as a means to secure spiritual elevation and emancipation or perfect freedom which was the supreme end of human life and which demanded the highest self-sacrifice and self-restraint on the part of the aspirant after final liberation. As a matter of fact the Āryans were distinguished from the Un-Āryans by marks of pure and good conduct and high culture and civilisation. Atri describes the following qualities of which purity is the first as the characteristics of a Brahman viz. Purity, desire for doing good unto others, absence of strained and unnatural exertion, absence of jealousy, absence of avarice, self-restraint, charity and mercy.¹ The sage Dakṣiṇa lays down the following rules and regulations as to what thing is pure and what thing is impure and about purity of conduct. What is pure should be done and what is impure should be avoided by intelligent men.² Care should always be bestowed on the purificatory rites described in the Smṛitis. All the rites of a twice-born person who is divorced from purity of conduct become futile.³ Purity spoken of is two-fold, external and internal. External purity is effected by water earth etc. Purity of thought is internal purity.⁴ External purity is superior to impurity and internal purity is superior to external one. He who is pure in both is said to be in a state of purity and no one else.⁵ Earth should be applied to the impure parts once after urination and thrice after evacuation, ten times on the left palm, seven times on both the palms and thrice on the feet.⁶ There is one kind of purification for the day time and another one is laid down for the night, similarly there is one kind of purification laid down for an easy time and another one for distressed time.⁷ A half of the purification which is necessary in the day time is laid down for the night; half of it for a diseased person and half for him who is in a hurry to go in the middle of a road. There is no impurity for a person who is visited

with a calamity.¹ More or less should not be done in the matter of purification by him who wishes for purity. There is no penance for the transgression of the established practice.² Manu lays down certain rules about internal purification. Thus he says: The learned are purified by a forgiving disposition, those who have committed forbidden acts by liberality, secret sinners by muttering sacred texts and those who best know the Veda by austerities.³ By earth and water is purified what ought to be made pure, a river by its current and a woman whose thoughts have been impure is purified by the menstrual secretion.⁴ The sage Vasistha has laid down the dictum that even the Vedas do not purify him who is devoid of good conduct.⁵ Similarly Pārāśara says that good conduct is the true defender of virtue among all castes of men. Without it a man needs must be hostilely disposed towards virtue.⁶

**(ii) Regulations about compulsory bath and sipping
of water (āchaman) for purification**

The sage Yājñavalkya mentions bathing and purity as parts of the obligatory and self-imposed religious duties to be observed by all (*Niyama*).⁷ Manu enjoins a student belonging to the first order of life to take bath every day for purification as also a Snātaka to bathe early in the morning after voiding the faeces.⁸ Similarly it is laid down by Pārāśara that a man should never take dinner without taking his bath.⁹ One is further enjoined to take bath after having dreamt a bad dream, or after having vomitted or shaved himself or after having intercourse with a woman (in time of her season due to possibility of conception), or after an exposure to the smoke of a cremation ground. If one has vomitted after he has eaten, let him sip water.¹⁰ A menstruating woman becomes pure by bathing after the menstrual secretion has ceased to flow.¹¹ Commendable is a bath during the day, in waters purified by the rays of the sun. A night bath other than one made under the auspices of a lunar eclipse is always prohibited.¹² A bath under the auspices of a lunar eclipse is enjoined as obligatory in the scriptures.¹³ Dakṣa lays down the following rules for bath and rinsing the mouth with water. When the dawn arrives, one should after duly performing the

1. (5-12, 6-19) 2. (5-13) 3. (5-107) 4. (5-108) 5. (6-3) 6. (1-36)
 7. (Y. S. 3-314) 8. (2-176, 4-152) 9. (1-39, 12-43) 10. (12-1, M. S. 5-144).
 11. (M. S. 5-66). 12. (P. S. 12-20) 13. (12-21).

purificatory works (so passing urine and excreta) and cleansing teeth, bath in the morning¹ Bathing in the morning is the purifier of the highly dirty body having nine apertures and passing urine and excreta day and night² The organs of a sleeping person become moistened and pass discharges The superior organs thereby come to the level of the inferior ones.³ Besmeared with sweat and perspiration one gets up from the bed Therefore without bathing one must not perform any religious rites such as the recitation of the Mantras, the celebration of Homa (sacrifice) etc.⁴ If a Brāhman getting up from the bed at dawn takes his daily bath early in the morning for three years, he has the sin of his entire birth dissipated.⁵ The Rishis highly speak of early bathing in the morning, for it yields fruits seen and unseen One who bathes in the morning with his soul purified is entitled to perform all rites such as the recitation of the Mantras etc.⁶ It is said that one should rinse the mouth after bathing By performing the *Tchuman* (rinsing) according to the following regulation one attains to purification.⁷ Having washed both hands and feet, one should drink water three times after feeling it carefully Then one should rub the mouth twice with the thumb curved a little.⁸ Manu lays down that one must sip water in the following circumstances Though one may be already pure, let him sip water after sleeping, sneezing, eating, spitting, telling untruths, and drinking water likewise when he is going to study the Veda.⁹ The Sage Yajnavalkya in this connection lays down that every twice-born person before and after taking meals should sip water accompanied by a formula called *Āposhana*.¹⁰ After bathing, drinking water, yawning, sleeping, walking, putting on clothes (as also after weeping, reading etc.,) one should rinse his mouth again even if he has done it once before.¹¹ Gotama similarly says "After sleeping, dining and sneezing, he shall again sip water though he may have done so before."¹² Likewise, after changing clothes passing semen, urine and excreta and after conversing with degraded castes.¹³ The sage Āpastambha also says "On touching during sleep or in sternutation of the oilluvia of the nose or of the eyes, on touching blood, hair, fire, kiao, a Brāhman or a woman,

1 (2-6). 2 (2-7). 3 (2-8). 4 (2-9). 5 (2-10). 6 (2-12).
 7, (2-13). 8 (2-14). 9 (M S 5-145). 10. (Y S. 1-100). 11 (Y S. 1-100).
 12 (G D S. 1-37). 13 (U S. 2-1 to 3)

and after having walked on the high road, and after having touched an impure thing or man, and after having put on his lower garment, he shall either bathe or sip water or merely touch water until he considers himself clean."¹

(iii) Regulations regarding purification from defilement by touch.

Defilement by touch of a chāndāla or a degraded person (Patita)

Pārāsara has laid down that a Brāhman having touched a tree growing on a cremation ground, a chāndāla (untouchable) or a seller of soma should bathe with all his clothes on.² One should remain at a distance of a Yuga (i.e. four hands) from a chāndāla the most degraded caste, two Yugas from a parturient woman and four Yugas from a degraded person (Patita).³ The practice of remaining at a certain distance from certain classes of degraded persons leading a filthy and dirty life and not touching them corresponds with the modern system of a quarantine whereby persons suffering from infectious or contagious diseases are segregated in a secluded place far away from the city so as to prevent their coming into contact with healthy persons.

Defilement by touch of certain animals.

Pārāsara further lays down certain regulations regarding defilement by touch of certain animals such as dog etc. Thus he says that a Brāhman having been bitten by a dog, jackal, wolf, donkey, pig etc, should bathe and repeat the sacred Gāyatrī the mother of the Vedas.⁴ A person of other castes bitten by a dog would be pure again by bathing in water in which cow-horns have been dipped, at the estuary of a great river and by seeing the sea.⁵ A Brāhman having been bitten by a dog, at the close of his Vedic studies or at the completion of a vow, should resume his cleanness by bathing in washings of gold and by taking clarified butter as well.⁶ A Brāhman having been bitten by a dog during the observance of a vow should fast for three nights and then complete his vow after having taken clarified butter mixed with washings of Kusa grass.⁷ A part of the human body smelled, licked, or scratched by a dog should be purified by washing it with water and cauterising it with fire.⁸

1. (A. D. S. 1-5-16-14). 2. (12-25). 3. (12-47). 4. (5-1). 5. (5-2).
6. (5-3) 7. (5-4). 8. (5-6).

Defilement by touch of corpse.

Those who have touched a corpse are purified after ten days. This rule however applied to Sapinda relations only of the deceased. As regards the Samanodhaka who give libations of water to his deceased relative they were purified after 3 days. But all others who carry a dead body to the cemetery or touch it, are purified after one day and night added to three periods of three nights.¹

When touch of a Sūdra or even touch of a Brāhman in violation of the proscribed regulations causes defilement.

Pūrīshara has laid down that a Brāhman touching the person of a Sūdra, after he has washed his mouth after eating, should take a bath for purification, while having touched one with unwashed mouth after eating, he should practise a Prājāpatyn penance.² In case a Brāhman who has not washed his mouth after eating (Ucchlusta) touches another Brāhman who has not similarly washed his mouth after eating, both these persons or in case a Brahman touches a dog or a Sūdra before washing his mouth after eating then he should fast for a day and take the compound known as *panchagavya* (containing cow's urine, dung, milk, curd and clarified butter) in order to recover his purity.³ The rule prohibiting touch of even of a Brahman at the time of dinner is based on the principle that different persons may have different aurn which may be even impure and it is not therefore advisable to touch them, as they spread around them an electrical aura of impressions which may be contaminating. Therefore on being likewise touched by castes that are untouchable one is enjoined to bathe. He who takes the residuo of their food should perform a Krichhra penance for 6 months.⁴ Āpastambha in his Dharma Sutras lays down the following regulations about defilement by touch of Sudras. Thus he says: (1) If a Sudra touches him while he is taking meal, he shall leave off eating. Haradatta commenting on this Sutra observes that according to some, the touch of a Sudra does not defile at any other time than at dinner, while according to others a Sūdra's touch defiles always. (2) Nor shall he eat sitting in the same row, with unworthy people i.e. who are neither of good family nor possess learning and virtue. (3) Nor shall he eat sitting in the same row with persons

1 (M. S. 5-64). 2 (7-21). 3 (7-22, A. S. 9-32). 4 (At S. 74)

amongst whom one rises while they eat and gives his leavings to his pupils or sips water. According to the commentator Hardatta, a person who misbehaves thus is called a 'dinner thorn.' This point of etiquette is strictly observed in our days also as stated by Dr Buhler in his comments to the translation on the Sūtras. (4) Nor shall he eat where they give him food reviling him ¹

(iv) Regulations interdicting touch during impurity due to birth and death.

Pārāsara lays down certain regulations interdicting touch of a person during the period of his impurity due to birth and death of any member of his family ² As regards impurity due to death, no Sapinda relations of the deceased could be touched during the period of impurity while as regards impurity due to birth only, the parents of the child, could not be touched. The father regained purity immediately after bathing that very day while the mother of the newly born child remained impure for 10 days.³ The period of impurity due to death in one's family in respect of a Brāhman is three days.⁴ According to Manu the *Sapinda relationship* (agnacy) ceases with the seventh person (in the ascending or descending line) and thereafter the relationship is one of *Samānodaka*. The period of impurity to be observed by a Sapinda on account of the death of his relation (of full age) according to Manu is 10 days, while that for a Samānodaka is three days.⁵ The rule of 3 days' impurity laid down by Pārāsara would therefore apply to Samānodaka relations only of the deceased and not his Sapindas. According to Pārāsara, the person of a Brāhman becomes purer through divine worship and his body may be touched at that time only but not at any other time during the term of impurity due to a birth in his family ⁶ The period of impurity due to a birth in his family is ten days in the case of a Brāhman, 12 days in the case of a Kshatriya, 15 days in the case of a Vaishya and 30 days in the case of a Sūdra⁷

(v) Impurity due to suicide and rules of purification.

In case of suicide of a person by a fall from an elevated place, or by burning in fire, the agnate relations of such a person

1. (A. D. S 1-5-17-1 to 4) 2. (3-1). 3. (3-30, 31). 4. (3-2).
5. (5-59, 60) 6 (3-3). 7. (3-4)

become pure by bath only and they have not to observe any period of impurity ¹ In the *Parasara Madhaviya* an opinion of *Pārśara* is stated to the effect that if a *Brāhman* doing *Agnihotra* (fire sacrifice) commits suicide by a fall from an elevated place etc., his dead body should be cremated without *Mantras* and a penance performed thereafter as determined by *Brāhmanas*, while it is stated in *Hemadri* that the dead body of such a person should be got cremated at the hands of *Sudras* without any rite of cremation as in the case of sinners (*Patita*) *Pārśara* next describes the fate of the person who violently terminates his own life by hanging either out of inordinate pride, incurable love, or excessive fright or anger ² For a period of sixty thousand years the spirit of a person committing such suicide is consigned to the darkness of the hell called *Andhatāmra* which is full of blood and fetid pus ³ No period of impurity should be observed in respect of such violent death of his deceased relation by suicide The rite of cremation is denied to the corpse of a person committing suicide no tears should be shed for him nor should any libation of water be offered unto the spirit of such a person ⁴ Carriers and cremators of the corpse of a person who has committed suicide by hanging should regain their personal purity by practising the penance of *Taple Kṛcchra* This is what has been enjoined by *Prājāpati* ⁵

(vi) Interdiction of the touch of a woman in menses or in confinement.

As regards a woman in menstruation, *Pārśara* lays down the rule interdicting her touch during the first three days of her monthly flow and he says that such a woman regains her personal cleanness on the fourth day of her flow after bathing but she is not privileged to undertake any rite whether pertaining to the gods or one's departed manes till the complete cessation of the discharge for the month.⁶ A woman becomes as impure as a *Chandāl* (the most degraded caste) on the first day of her menstrual flow, as a murderess of a *Brāhman* (*Brāhmaghātini*) on the 2nd day and as a washerwoman (*Rājāl*) on the third day She regains her cleanness on the fourth day ⁷ By this verse *Pārśara* only

1. (3-12). 2. (4-1). 3. (4-3). 4. (4-3). 5. (4-4).
6. (7-17, M. S. 5-66). 7. (7-19)

means to say that a man having an intercourse with a menstruating woman on the 1st, 2nd, or the 3rd day of her menstrual flow before she takes bath on the fourth day, incurs the sin of an intercourse with a chāndālī and the other degraded women and that is the reason why the menstruating woman is called a chāndālī and so on. The period of uncleanness to be observed by a woman in confinement due to child-birth, in case there is abortion of the foetus or miscarriage of the child is for the number of days corresponding to the months of her pregnancy.¹ She cannot be touched during such period of uncleanness. Abortion takes place within the fourth month and miscarriage upto the 6th month of gestation. A delivery of the child after that time is called parturition and the period of uncleanness for the same is 10 days.² At the close of parturition, if the mother is delivered of a living child, its agnates become unclean for purposes of touch for 10 days. In the case of a still-born child, its mother only is regarded unclean for 10 days.³ The period of uncleanness should be counted as running from the day preceding in cases where menstruation, death or delivery would take place in the night.⁴ A Brāhman householder not in any way coming in touch with his wife after parturition becomes clean by bathing while his parturient wife remains unclean for 10 days.⁵ Even a Brāhman who is well versed in the Vedas with all their six subdivisions is affected by birth uncleanness on the parturition of his wife, if he happens to come in contact with her.⁶ A Brāhman is defiled only by an unclean contact there being no other defilement in respect of a Brāhman. Hence by all means a Brāhman should renounce defiling contacts.⁷

(vii) Rules regarding pure and impure things and modes of purification from defilement.

Vessels of bell metal, smelled by kine, or defiled by the touch of dogs, crows, etc., or out of which Sūdras have taken their food should be purified by rubbing them with 10 kinds of ashes.⁸ A vessel of bell metal, defiled by the touch of wine should be purified by heating it on fire.⁹ Earthen vessels are purified by heating them in fire, while paddy should be purified by attrition.¹⁰ Large measures of

1. (3-17, M. S. 5-66). 2. (3-18) 3. (3-19) 4. (3-20). 5. (3-31).
 6. (3-32). 7. (3-33). 8. (7-24). 9. (7-23). 10. (7-28).

paddy or large numbers of clothes, anywise defiled are purified by sprinkling them over with water, while they are purified by simple washing when their measure or number is small¹ Fabrics made of bamboo skin, wool, jute, cotton or silk are purified by simply dipping them in water² Bedsteads, woollen pillows as well as yellow or red fabrics should be purified by exposing them to the sun³ Cats, flies, worms, insects, vermin and frogs touch things both pure and impure, hence nothing is defiled by their contact. Thus is the dictum of Manu⁴ A stream of water which comes flowing over the ground is not considered defiled by a used remainder⁵ Betels, sugar-cane, oil seeds, oil, *Madhu parka* (a compound of honey, milk, curd, ghee and sugar offered to an honourable guest and so forth) unguents and Soma juice, if previously used or partaken of by another do not suffer any defilement thereby This is the dictum of Manu⁶ Mires of road water, boats, hay, and burned bricks are purified by exposing them to the sun and the air⁷ Yājñavalkya observes Mud and water lying on a roadside and buildings made of burnt bricks when touched by chandulas or other degraded castes and by dogs and crows are purified by air⁸ Parusara says Dust blown about by the wind as well as broad streams of water suffer no defilement women, infants, and old men are always pure.⁹ One should always touch one's right ear after having sneezed, coughed, spitted or bitten any part of one's body as well as after having told a lie or talked with a degraded person¹⁰ The fire-god the Vedas the sun, and the moon reside in the right ear of a Brāhman¹¹ The holy pools and streams as the Prabhāsa, the Ganges etc. always reside in the right ear of a Brāhman This is the dictum of Manu¹² The sage Yājñavalkya mentions the following methods of purifying different things. Thus he says that the purification of gold and silver vessels, of pearl oysters, sacrificial vessels, vegetables, cords, roots, fruits, clothes etc., is obtained by mere water¹³ While the sprinkling of water purifies beddings and a collection of raiments.¹⁴ Woollen and silken raiments are purified by the ashes of plantain

1. (7-29). 2. (7-30) 3. (7-31). 4. (7-33). 5. (7-34) 6. (7-35).
 7. (7-36). 8. (Y S 1-197). 9. (7-37). 10. (7-38). 11. (7-39). 12. (7-40).
 13. (1-182). 14. (1-184)

leaves, earth, cow's urine and water¹ Silken raiments are purified with cow's urine and water and earthen vessels, if not particularly impure, are purified by being burnt again He next mentions the following things and articles as always pure viz., the hand of an artisan, articles for sale, articles obtained by begging, and the face of a woman at the time of conjugal intercourse.² Earth is purified by rubbing, burning, or in course of time till the sign of the impure object is entirely destroyed or by the sprinkling of cow-dung and water, or by rain or by digging, or by rubbing with cow-dung A house is purified by rubbing and pasting with cow-dung³ If any edible is made impure by the smell of a cow, by hairs, insects and flies, then water, ashes or earth should be thrown into it for purification⁴ Tin, lead, copper and brass are purified by water mixed with ashes or acid or simple water.⁵ Impure gold and silver is purified by earth and water or by removal of the bad smell Whatever article is pronounced to be pure by Brāhmans is pure.⁶ Water in its natural state and on earth (even if it is impure) is always pure⁷ The rays of the sun, fire, dust, shade, cow, horse, earth, air, frost and fly even when touched by a chāndāla are always pure and so is a young one while sucking milk⁸ The face of a goat and horse is pure but that of a cow and the impurities of a person's body are not so The tail of a cow is however pure and its touch was considered meritorious. The roads are purified by the rays of the sun, moon, and the wind⁹ Drops of water begotten in the mouth, drops of water left on any part of the body after rinsing and hairs of mustache entering the mouth are pure, similarly any food stuff etc, sticking on the teeth and not dropped out is also pure.¹⁰ As regards voiding the excreta, Yājñavalkya lays down the rule that the twice-born having placed thread on the ear (right ear which is holy), with his face directed towards the north should pass urine and excreta during the day and period of conjunction (morning and evening) and with his face towards the south in the night.¹¹ Manu lays down the following rules in the matter. Let him not void urine on a road, on ashes or in a cow pen,¹² nor on ploughed land, in water, on an altar of bricks, on a mountain, on the ruins of a temple nor even on an ant-hill,¹³ nor in holes inhabited by

1. (1-186) 2. (1-187, M. S 5-130). 3 (1-188). 4. (1-189). 5. (1-190).
 6. (1-191) 7. (1-192) 8. (1-193) 9 (1-194) 10 (1-195). 11. (1-196).
 12. (4-45) 13. (5-46).

living creatures nor while he walks or stands nor on reaching the bank of a river nor on the top of a mountain¹ Let him never void faeces or urine facing the wind or fire or looking towards a Brahman, the sun water or cows² otherwise his intellect perishes³ He may cast himself having covered the ground with sticks, clods, leaves, grass and the like, restraining his speech, keeping himself pure wrapping up his body and covering his head⁴ Earth and water must be used to cleanse the impure parts after he has voided urine and faeces as also for removing the two so impurities of the human body viz., only excretions & men blood, the fatty substance of the brain, urine, faeces, the mucus of the nose, ear-wax, phlegm tears the rheum of the eyes and sweat⁵ He who desires to be pure must clean his impure parts by application of earth several times⁶ Then let him after sipping water sprinkle the cavities (ie of the head and also the navel and the heart) likewise when he is going to recite the Veda and always before he takes food⁷ Let him who desires bodily purity first sip water 3 times and then twice wipe his mouth but a woman and a Sudra shall perform each act once only⁸ Drops of water from the mouth which do not fall on a limb do not make a man impure nor the hair of moustache entering the mouth nor what adheres to the teeth⁹

Defilement of food by touch and even sight of the impure.

Āpastambin in his Dharma Sutra has down the following rules about defilement of food by touch and sight of impure persons, things or animals Thus he says (1) Food touched by a Brahman or other high caste person who is impure becomes impure but not unfit for eating The commentator Haradatta observes on the above Sutra that food which is simply impure may be purified by putting it on the fire, sprinkling it with water, touching it with ashes or earth and praising it (2) But what has been brought (whether it is touched or not) by an impure Sudra must not be eaten The commentator Haradatta remarks that according to some the food becomes unfit for eating only if in bringing it the Sudra has touched it (3) Nor that food in which there is a hair But this rule holds good only if the hair had been cooked with

1 (4-47).	2 (4-48).	3. (4-52).	4 (4-49).	5 (5-134, 135).
6 (5-136)	7 (5-138)	8 (5-139)	9 (5-141).	

the food. If a hair falls into it at dinner then it is to be purified by an addition of clarified butter and may be eaten. (4) Or any other unclean substance e.g. worms, beetles, nail-parings, excrements of rats etc., (5) Nor must that food be eaten which has been touched with an unclean substance (e.g. garlic). (6) Nor that in which excrements or limbs of a mouse are found (7) Nor that which has been touched by the foot even of a pure person (8) Nor what has been touched with the hem of a garment (9) Nor that which has been looked at by a dog or an *Apapātra* i.e. a person whom one must not allow to eat from one's dishes e.g. Chāndāla, Patita (degraded person), a woman in her courses, or during the ten days of impurity after confinement (10) Nor that which has been brought in the hem of a garment even though it may be clean (11) Nor what has been brought at night by a female slave (*Dāsī*). The commentator Haradatta thinks that as the Sūdra has the feminine gender, it does not matter if a male slave brings the food. But others forbid also this.¹

Rules of purity to be observed by persons concerned in the preparation of food for the twice-born.

Āpastambha lays down the following rules of purity to be observed by persons concerned in the preparation of food of a householder for his meals (1) Pure men of the first three castes shall prepare the food of a householder which is used at the Vaisvadeva ceremony i.e. for his meals (2) The cook shall not speak, nor cough nor sneeze while his face is turned towards the food. (3) He shall purify himself by touching water, if he has touched his hair, his limbs, or his garment (4) or Sūdras may help in the preparation of food under the superintendence of men of the first three castes This Sūtra does not mean the actual preparation of food by Sūdras as interpreted by some but it means other services only in connection with the preparation of food such as mending vegetables, cleansing cooking utensils etc., as there is a distinct dictum of Manu² to the effect that one should not eat the cooked food of Sūdras, and the word used in the Sūtra being *Sanskartā*, purifier and not Pāchaka i.e. a cook. (5) For them is prescribed the same rule of sipping water as for their masters (6) Besides the

1. (A. D. S 1-5-16-22 to 32)

2 (4-223).

Sudras shall daily cause to be cut the hair of their heads, their beards, the hair of their bodies and their nails (7) And they shall bathe keeping their clothes on (8) or they may trim their hair and nails on the 6th day of each half-month or on the days of the full and new moon (9) He (the householder himself) shall place on the fire that food which has been prepared without supervision and shall sprinkle it with water Such food also they state to be fit for the gods.¹

(viii) Relaxation of the rules about purity etc in times of distress

Purusa next states the rules to be observed in times of distress Thus he says During the prevalence of a famine, in disease, or in a foreign country or on the outbreak of a civil disturbance in one's mother-land, one's primary thought should be the protection of one's body Piety should be a secondary consideration under the foregoing circumstances² By any measure whether mild or violent, one should try to recoup one's bodily health when diseased, and practise piety when physically capable.³ One need not think of rules of purity of conduct when in distress Let him first get rid of the trouble and then purify himself by necessary penance and practise virtues⁴ The question of impurity should not be thought of when a city is besieged, when there is a tumult in the country, when the country is besieged by an army when a house is set on fire when a sacrifice is begun, or in great festivities.⁵ There is no defilement or sin from touch in religious processions of idols of gods in the public, in pilgrimages, in marriage sacrifice or festivities⁶ It is similarly laid down by Yājñavalkya that there is no purification laid down in gifts, sacrifice, war, devastation of the country calamity and distress⁷

(12) Special rules of interdiction regarding touch and intercourse with chūṇḍāṇas, degraded persons (patitas), and low castes (Antyajas)

(1) Defilement by touch or intercourse with chūṇḍāṇas and degraded castes (Patitas)

The Dharma Śāstras abound in special rules of interdiction and prohibition as regards the relations of the Āryans with

1. (A. D. S. 2-2-3-1 to 9)	2 (7-41)	3 (7-42).	4 (7-43)
5 (At. S. 228; D. S. 6-18).	5. (At. S. 245)	6 (8-29).	

Chāndālas and degraded castes (*Patitas*) in matters of touch food, drink, marriage, social intercourse and so on. According to Manu these classes of persons were outside the pale of the 4 castes of the Āryans, there being no fifth class.¹ They were also outside the pale of all religious rites² They were unworthy of all social intercourse with the Āryans on account of their unclean habits and manners, immoral and cruel practices (*Asat Āchāra*) and abject ignorance and they were born of *pratiloma* marriages (between a male of an inferior caste and a female of a higher caste).³ Manu says "Let him not stay together with out-casts (*Patitas*) nor with *Chāndālas* nor with *Pulkasas* nor with low-caste men (*Antyas* or *Antyajas*) nor with *Antyavasāyins* staying at the end of a city or village,"⁴ They were segregated in houses for removed from those in the city or village inhabited by the Āryans.⁵ The Āryans had no intercourse of any kind whatever with these classes of persons as regards touch, food, drink, marriage and so forth as their contact was degrading. Thus Manu says "A man who fulfils a religious duty shall not seek intercourse with them; their transactions shall be among themselves and their marriages with their equals.⁶ The kingdom in which such bastards sully the purity of the castes are born, perishes quickly together with its inhabitants⁷ Their food should be given to them by others than an Āryan giver. The food was given to them in broken vessels (*Apapātra*)⁸ They took their meals in altogether separate dishes which were broken⁹ They were prohibited from visiting the cities and village occupied by the Āryans at night time and they were ordered under the king's laws to visit the cities and villages of the Āryans for necessary purposes in the day time only (*Dvāchareyuhu*) bearing peculiar marks distinguishing them from the Āryans.¹⁰ Their dress consisted of the garments of the dead and black iron constituted their ornaments¹¹ They were to follow the professions of executing criminals, corpse-bearers removing the corpses of persons having no relatives, and of doing services in burial grounds¹² and they were allowed to take for themselves the clothes, the beds,

1. (10-4). 2 (Y. S. 1-93) 3 (10-58, Y. S. 1-95) 4. (4-79). 5 (10-51).

6 (10-53). 7 (10-61) 8 (10-51, 54). 9. (10-52). 10. (10-54, 55).

11. (10-52) 12 (10-55, 56, 39).

and the ornaments of the criminals executed by them¹ The chāndālas were base born bastards of impure origin being the off-spring of hybrid marriages (*Pratiloma*) between Brāhman women and Sudra men and they belonged to the lowest class of men² Strictest rules were framed by the law-givers interdicting all intercourse on the part of Āryons with Chāndālas and persons belonging to the degraded castes who were outside the pale of caste

(II) Special rules of purification from defilement and pollution by touch of chāndāla etc

Manu lays down the rule that "When a person has touched a Chāndāla (called Divakirti or one who moves about during the day only) a menstruating woman, an out-cast (Patita), a woman in childbed, a corpse or one who has touched a corpse he becomes pure by bathing³ Similarly Yājñavalkya lays down that purification of a person touched by a woman in her menses or by one who is impure (e.g. a Chāndāla or a person of the degraded caste) is effected by bathing. But as regards the touch of a person who has been defiled by touch with a Chāndāla, or a woman in menses Yājñavalkya lays down that, a person touched by such a person is purified by rinsing the mouth and by reciting once mentally the Vedic Mantras relating to water (viz., the hymn of the Rig Veda beginning with Āpohisthā etc.⁴), and the famous Gāyatri Mantra of the Sandhyā (daily prayer) repeated by the Brāhmanas.⁵ Āpastambha lays down that a Brāhman having unknowingly touched a Chāndāla or a Svapacha (i.e. eater of dogs' flesh) before washing his face after a meal, should regain his purity by practising an expiatory rite.⁶ Similarly Atri says that when one is touched by a Chāndāla while he has still the leavings of food in his mouth he should get purified by fasting for three nights.⁷ Pārasara also says that a Brāhman having touched a Chāndāla should bathe with all his clothings on.⁸ Similar rules are laid down by Atri, Yama, Samvarta and several other law-givers.⁹

1. (10-56). 2. (10-16) 3. (5-85) 4. (R. V. 10-9) 5. (Y. S. 3-30).
 6. (A. S. 4-3 & 38, 39) 7. (At. S. 235) 8. (P. S. 12-25) 9. (At. S. 235, Ym. S. 63 Sm. S. 178).

Defilement by sexual intercourse with a Chāndāla woman.

Having gone unto a Chāndāla or Svapacha woman, a Brāhman should fast for 3 nights with the permission of three Brāhmans. He should shave his head together with the tuft of hair (Shikhā) on the crown of his head, and practise three Prājāpatyas and other penances and drink Panchagavya the next morning.¹ By co-habiting unknowingly with a woman belonging to the castes of Chāndālas, Mlechhas, Svapachas, or other low castes, one is purified by a Parāka penance² But if one has sexual intercourse with her willingly and procreates children, he is degraded to the same caste; there is no doubt in it, for that man is born as her son.³ If one touches a low caste woman, he should get himself purified by fasting for 3 nights. This is the eternal regulation⁴ If one co-habits with a low caste woman, he is obliged to perform the prescribed penance, he should take his bath before that.⁵

Defilement of an Āryan woman by Sexual intercourse with a Chāndāla.

If an Āryan woman has sexual intercourse with a Chāndāla, she should confess her guilt to 10 eminent Brāhmans.⁶ Immersed upto her chin in a well containing clay and liquid cow-dung, she should stay there for one night abjuring all food to regain purity.⁷ After that, she would be lifted out of the well and having entirely shaved her head, she should take a barley diet. Then she should fast for 3 nights passing the last night of her penance in water⁸ Then she should take Panchagavya with a decoction of certain roots, leaves, and flowers,⁹

Defilement by sight and touch

The sage Pārāsara lays down that a Brāhman having seen a Chāndāla should cast a look at the sun, but having touched him, he should bathe with all his wearing apparels on¹⁰

Defilement by conversation

Pārāsara further lays down that a Brāhman having conversed with a Chāndāla should expiate his sin by first holding a conversation with a Brāhman and by reciting the Gāyatri thereafter¹¹

1. (P.S 10-5, 6) 2. (At.S 183) 3 (At S 184) 4 (At S 269). 5. (At.S. 270).
6 (P S 10-18). 7 (P S 10-19). 8 (P. S. 10-20) 9. (P S. 10-21).
10. (P. S. 6-22) 11. (6-20)

Defilement by sharing the bed with a Chāṇḍāla.

Having shared the same bed with a Chāṇḍāla, a Brāhman should fast for three nights and having walked the same road with a Chāṇḍāla, he should regain his purity by reciting the Gāyatrī Mantra ¹

Defilement by drinking water in touch with a Chāṇḍāla.

A Brahman drinking water in touch with a Chāṇḍāla should regain his purity by fasting for a day and night and by bathing thrice during the fast ². Having drunk the water of a well which has been defiled by the touch of a Chāṇḍāla's water-pot, a Brāhman should live on barley and cow's urine for 3 days whereby he would regain his purity ³.

Defilement by drinking water from a Chāṇḍāla's tank or from his vessel

Having unknowingly drunk the water of a tank which a Chāṇḍāla has caused to be excavated, a Brāhman should fast for a night and the whole day following ⁴. The expiation for the sin of unknowingly drinking out of a Chāṇḍāla's vessel is the performance of a Chāṇḍāyana penance on the part of a Brāhman provided that the water is belched out immediately after taking. But if the water is retained and digested in the stomach then the expiation is by performing a Krichira penance ⁵.

Defilement by stay of a Chāṇḍāla in a Brāhman's house or his entry therein

If a Chāṇḍāla conceals himself or lives incognito in the house of a Brāhman, he should be driven out of the house as soon as it is known that he is a Chāṇḍāla. His brethren Brāhman learned in the Vedas should favour the defiled Brāhman as follows for absolving his sin ⁶. For three days in the company of these Brāhman, the delinquent Brāhman should take cooked sesamum with milk, curd, clarified butter and cow's urine and bathe twice each day ⁷. For the first three days he should take cooked sesamum soaked in cow's urine with milk, with milk curd for the second three days and with clarified butter for the last three days of the penance ⁸.

1 (6-21) 2 (A. S. 9-40). 3 (P. S. 6-24). 4 (6-23) 5 (6-25, 26).
6 (6-32). 7 (6-34) 8 (6-35).

Articles of copper or bell metal should be purified with ashes, and clothes by washing, while the earthen vessels kept in the room should be thrown away¹ After that, a vessel containing safflower, treacle, cotton seed, salt, oil and clarified butter, should be kept at the door of the room and the room should be set to fire² Having been thus absolved of sin, he should feed the Brāhmans and make gift of thirty kine with a bullock to them.³ The ground should be again plastered and purified by performing rites of Homa and Japa upon it. The ground on which a Brāhman stands can never suffer any defilement or contamination.⁴ In case where a woman of the cobbler, hunter or pulkasa classes resides incognito in the house of a person belonging to any of the four Āryan castes, only half of what has been stated above should be practised by way of purification with the exception of burning down the room.⁵ If a Chāndāla enters once into the house of any one, he should be driven out and all the earthen pots kept therein should be thrown away.⁶ Defiled earthen vessels containing oil, clarified butter etc, should not be discarded; they should be purified by sprinkling water over them.⁷

Defilement by shadow of a chāndāla.

The Brāhman who goes under the shadow of a Svapacha (eater of dog's flesh) should bathe and get himself purified by drinking clarified butter.⁸ If a person unknowingly salutes a low caste man, he should immediately bathe and get himself purified by taking clarified butter.⁹

(iii) Whether the rule of untouchability was a modern innovation or whether it had the sanction of the vedas ?

A vigorous campaign has been started recently against the rule of untouchability by a certain section of reformers among the Hindus who have propounded the view that the rule of untouchability as observed and practised by the Hindus at present was a later innovation grafted on the Hindu religion from outside and it had no sanction in the Vedas. It is therefore necessary to consider here first whether the above view is correct by an examination of the holy texts of the Vedas and the Hindu Shāstras. It may be stated here at the outset that there is no doubt that the classes

1. (6-37) 2 (6-38) 3 (6-39) 4 (6-40). 5. (6-42) 6. (6-43).
 7. (6-44). 8 (At S 284) 9. (At S. 308).

known as *Nishādas*, *Chāndālas* and so on existed so far back as in times of the Rig Veda the white Yajurveda the Brāhmanas and the Upanishads as appears from the revealed texts. The institution of the 4 castes (*Chaturvarṇa*) which is of divine origin was definitely established in the time of the Rig Veda as appears not only from the Purnsha Sukta¹ but also from several other hymns.² I have shown above that in the time of the Rig Veda there existed 2 fundamental divisions among the people viz., the Āryans and the Un-Āryans called *Dasyus*, or *Dāsas* between whom and the Āryans there was an eternal feud from the earliest times. The Un-Āryans were the aborigines of India, who were described by the Āryan conquerors not only as *Dasyus* and *Dāsas* but as *Avarnas* (i.e. having a black complexion) and *Unāsas* (i.e. devoid of learning, good speech and culture) in contrast with the Āryans who were called *Savarnas* (having a white complexion) and had reached a high state of civilisation and culture in the time of the Rig Veda. The un-Āryans were also described sometimes as *Nishādas*. Thus the people of India then consisted of 4 Varnas or castes viz. The Brāhmanas, (priestly class), the Kshatriyas (military class), the Vaisyas (mercantile class) and the Sudras (servant class) and the fifth class called *Dasyus*, *Dāsas* or *Nishādas*. There are several passages in the Rig Veda and the other Vedas which described the people as *Pancha Janāḥ* (i.e. people of the five tribes) consisting of 4 Āryans castes and the 5th class called the Un-Āryan *Dasyus*, *Dāsas* or *Nishādas*.³ Now Yāska the author of Nirukta (Vedic etymology) on the authority of the Aupamanyava school explains the word *Nishāda* as one who lives on animals i.e. a hunter and on the authority of Niruktas or etymologists he derives the word *Nishāda* from the affix 'nī' and the root *ślad* as meaning one who lives a degraded life and earns his livelihood therefrom. The term *Nishāda* according to the last derivation means one in whom sin is embodied and it applied to the degraded castes and the *Chāndālas* who were known for leading a degraded, sinful, and impure life. The well known scholar Śāyana has also interpreted the word *Nishāda* in the same way. The modern term used in

1. (R. V 10-90). 2. (R. V 1-113-6, 8-25-16 to 18)

3. (R. V 1-89-10 9-65-23, 10-53-4, V S. 35-23, A V 7-6-1).

Southern India for the degraded castes is *Panchama* corresponding with the word *Panch Janāhā* used in the R̥g Veda which included the *Nishādas* and *Dāsyus* as shown above. It is however not clear from passages in the R̥g Veda whether the Āryans treated these classes of persons as untouchables as at present. This much however appears that the Āryans treated the aborigines as of an entirely different stock and race and treated them as unworthy of association and free intercourse on account of their impure and immoral practices and habits. There is a passage in the Vājasaneyi Samhitā¹ of the white Yajur Veda which enjoins on a purification of sacrificial vessels from defilement by touch of low-born persons by sprinkling water (Piokshana), before they were used at the sacrifice. The original text runs as follows "whatever of yours (i.e. the vessels of the sacrifice to whom the words are addressed) the impure (*Ashudhāhā*) have here by their touch polluted, I cleanse (*Shundhāmi*) for you from all defilement"² The word used in the above text for impure persons whose touch was considered sufficient to cause defilement is *Ashudhāhā* which has been translated by the commentator Mahidhara as low born persons (*Neecha Jātayaha*). This interpretation is further supported by an explanation of the same Mantra in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa which runs as follows "It is for the divine work, the sacrifice to the gods, that he consecrates the sacrificial vessels by sprinkling over them water accompanied with the above Mantra. For whatever belonging to them, some impure person has on this occasion desecrated by touching, that he thereby renders sacrificially pure for them by means of the water"² It would be seen from the above Vedic Mantra that even sacrificial vessels were defiled by the touch of impure persons like *Chāṇḍālas* and other low caste men and they were required to be purified by sprinkling water over them, for being made fit for use at the sacrifice. Now if vessels are defiled by the touch of low class and impure persons, how these persons could be allowed to touch high caste persons on occasions of religious rites and ceremonies or to enter into Hindu temples, as the latter alone were initiated and qualified to perform the sacred rites and ceremonies or to enter into the temples. There are also other passages in the same Veda

1. (V. S. 1-13) 2. (S. B. 1-1-3-12).

which go to show that the low castes whose touch was considered to cause a defilement for religious purposes, were firmly established in those times. Thus the following castes are mentioned in the Vajasaneyi Samhitā viz. *Nishād* (Hunter), fisher man, *Vrātya* (band of nomad non-conformists of Āryan extraction but absolutely independent and not following Āryan way of life), washer-man, iron smelter, *Bheel* (a blackman who carries bows and arrows in his hands), *Kirāta* (a savage who lives by hunting), *Pulhīsa* (a man of very low birth being born of a Nishāda and a Kshatriya) a cow-hillor and a *Chāndāla* (a man of an impure and degraded tribe and an outcast.)¹ It will be interesting to note in this connection that even *Satām Dayānand* the founder of the new sect of reform known as *Ārya Samāj* has observed in his commentary on the white Yajurveda in chapter 30 that the rule of untouchability had been clearly established in the time of the white Yajurveda and that persons belonging to low castes and castes known as untouchables had their houses separate at a distance from the city or village in which the caste Hindus resided. It is therefore quite apparent that the present day Ārya Samajists who ardently support the move for anti-untouchability reform are not loyal to the illustrious founder of their own sect. The next passage which goes to prove the existence of the rule of untouchability in the time of the Upanishads is found in the Brihaduranyaka Upanishad which runs as follows. "This deity called *Prāna* i.e. the soul of life, then after having destroyed the sin of the deities (presiding over the sense organs of speech, eye etc.,) technically called death, made him depart where the end is of the quarters. There it fixed the nbodo of sins of the said deities of sense organs. Hence let no one repair to the outerpeople called *Antya Janāh*. Let him not follow sin"² Now the great and well-known philosopher Sri Shankarāchārya commenting on the above passage has interpreted the word "*Antya Janāh*" or outerpeople as persons who do not deserve to be associated with either by conversation or by sight and who are enjoined to reside nt the end of the city or village at a great distance from the caste Hindus. Mann seems to have relied on the above Vedic passage in enjoining on a segregation of the low caste men and *Chāndālas* at the end of the city nway

1. (V S. 30-6, 7 8 12 14 16, 17, 18). 2. (B. U 1-3-10)

from the Āryans.¹ The reader can easily see from the above that there are clear Texts in support of the rule of untouchability and interdiction of touch with the untouchables not only in the Dharma Shāstras but also in the Vedas or the Revealed Scriptures of the Hindus and the contrary opinion expressed by several present-day so-called reformers shows an uncritical judgment and their colossal ignorance of the Hindu Shāstras. That the class of *Chāndālas* and out-casts was a separate class by itself and treated as such separately from the Hindus on account of their dirty and impure habits, appears clearly stated in another scriptural passage which says "Those who have done wicked and sinful acts are born in the wombs of the sinners as dogs, pigs, or *Chāndālas*."² It would therefore be clearly wrong on the part of the so-called present-day reformers preaching an abolition of untouchability from the Hindu religion altogether, in face of the above evidence, to attribute the custom of keeping these classes of degraded persons and sinners at an arm's length as a modern innovation created by the later day Brāhmans out of pride or contempt for these classes of poor persons. The rule of untouchability in Hindu Dharma Shāstras which is based on principles of hygiene and science evidently seems to have been framed with the object of preserving the racial purity and high culture of the Āryans, by preventing impure and filthy habits and customs of the low caste persons from creeping into the Hindu community and contaminating pure Āryan blood by indiscriminate and reckless unions with them. The question of purity was of such vital importance to the Āryans that the law-givers viewed with great dread and horror on the procreation of bastard offspring (*Varna Sankara*) by union of Āryan women with persons belonging to these low and degraded castes. In this, they echoed the noble thoughts and sentiments expressed by our Lord Shri Krishna in the Bhagvad Gītā,³ wherein it is further stated that a hybrid son born of a union with the degraded castes (*Varna Sankara*), leads one as well as his whole family to hell.⁴ A novel argument has been recently advanced by some to the effect that though there is a mention in the Shāstras of *Chāndālas* who formed the lowest class of untouchables, they were of one particular description only as narrated in the Rāmāyana about

1. (10-51) 2. (Ch. U. 5-10) 3. (3-24), 4. (1-41).

Trishanku viz., that they had red eyes, protruding tongue and luxuriant growth of hair all over their body like a bear, and that unless it was shown that persons of the above description are found existing at present, it cannot be stated that the persons who are stamped as untouchables at present are really Chūdālas.¹ The above argument is fallacious as it proceeds on an assumption, that the Chūdālas are of one description only as given in the Rāmāyaṇa but the correctness of this assumption is not yet established. In fact Chūdālas are not of one description only but there are several descriptions of Chūdālas as given in the Vedas the Brāhmanas, the Dharma Shāstras, the epics and the Purāṇas.² Further, according to the orthodox view a person's caste having been determined by birth and certain persons having been stamped as Chūdālas from birth and treated as untouchables by an unbroken tradition and custom extending over several generations and observed till to-day as is evidenced by voluminous documentary evidence, the burden of proving that the present-day untouchables are not Chūdālas is upon those who make the said assertion dogmatically and not upon those who have already made out a *prima facie* case in support of the rule of untouchability which has not yet been refuted by the pioneers of the movement for the proposed reform. Not only so but an express opinion has been already pronounced definitely by Āchārya Paadit Indira Raman Shāstri, a follower of the School of reformers headed by Gaadhi doing propaganda work for removal of untouchability, after a careful examination of the texts, to the effect that 'the present day untouchables are no other than the class of *Nishādas* and so on as mentioned in the Vedas' which is sufficient to refute the contrary view as propounded by Principal A. B. Dhruva. The curious reader is invited to refer to the article in the book described in the foot note below.³ The authorities cited above from Sruties and Smruties are sufficient to give a

1. (See the recent statement published by Mr. A. B. Dhruva Principal Benares Hindu University).

2. (R. 1-58-10 Mh. A. P. Ch. 27-28 B. P. 4-14-43 to 46 Vy. S. 1-2).

³ See the article of Āchārya Indira Raman Shāstri entitled 'The Untouchables right to study the Vedas', appended to the book called 'Temple entry and removal of untouchability' written by Mahātmā Gandhi in Hindi and published at Benares.

lie direct to the novel lesson taught by the different schools of modern reformers that the rule of untouchability had not the sanction of the Vedas. The scathing criticism against the practice and custom of untouchability "as a blot on the Hindu religion" made by the apostle and leader of the new movement and the dissemination of new ideas directly opposed to Sanātan religion seem to be not only without any foundation or justification but they are directly calculated to degrade the purity and high level of Sanātan religion of hoary antiquity and drag it from the heights of the Himālaya to an abysmal ditch of pitchy darkness and rank impurity. They are further likely to cause an utter disintegration of the Hindu community and to let loose in society wild forces of irreligion, impurity and insubordination leading to chaos and confusion in the Hindu community. It is high time when the religiously-minded Hindus should be on their strict guard to protect their sacred religion which has stood the test of ages hithertofores against ruthless attacks made by the reformers without abatement from time to time

(iv) Whether the Hindus Shāstras or the law of the land warrant the untouchables alleged right to temple entry.

The legal position under the existing law.

The pioneers of the so called reform movement have of late set up an alleged right of the untouchables to entry into the Hindu temples and carried on considerable propaganda work for removing the disabilities of these persons from entry into the Hindu Temples, even by medium of legislation. It is therefore necessary to consider here whether there is any sanction in the Shāstras for allowing the untouchable's right for entry into Hindu Temples for purposes of worship. It may be pointed out at the outset that Hindu Temples were constructed by the orthodox Hindus mostly after the rise of the 2 new religions, Buddhism and Jainism in about the 6th century before Christ. In several cases the settlers who erected the Hindu Temples have founded religious endowments and trusts at an outlay of large sums of money for the exclusive benefit of the caste Hindus only. In cases where there are express trust deeds with clear intention on the part of the founder of the religious endowments and temples as regards the persons who are entitled to the benefit of the said institutions and temples, and their right to

worship in the said temples, there is no difficulty in determining who is entitled to enter into the said temple for worship. Thus in the famous temple of Mambudoi Babulnath and the Mādhneshwari temple in Bombay, there are express trust deeds providing that only the caste Hindus shall be entitled to visit the temples for worshipping the deities installed therein. But in cases where there are no written Trust deeds regulating the user of Hindu Temples the question arises for consideration in view of an assertion on the part of the reformers that the untouchables have a right to entry into such temples for purposes of worship whether the above assertion is correct. It may be stated here at once that apart from the Shastric authorities and precepts in the matter by an unbroken custom extending over several generations past and beyond memory, no untouchable had ever entered into these temples for worship nor even asserted any such claim until the reformers took up the question and started the present move for the untouchables right to temple entry. The result therefore would be that a definite right is established in favour of the caste Hindus only to entry into the Hindu Temples for purposes of worship on the ground of immemorial custom and the presumed intention of the settler in favour of the caste Hindus only to the exclusion of the untouchables who have hitherto failed to establish any such fictitious right in their favour. It is submitted that this constitutes the common law of India which the British Courts are bound to recognise and administer in British Courts in matters of dispute between the caste Hindus (*Savarnas*) and the untouchables (*Avarnas*). Moreover it is further expressly laid down by section 112 of the Government of India Act 1919 which is a statute passed by the British Parliament that "the High Courts at Calcutta Madras and Bombay in the exercise of their original Jurisdiction shall in matters of dealing between party and party when both parties are subject to the same personal law or custom having the force of law, (e.g. Hindus) decide according to that personal law or custom." Further it is expressly provided in section 84 of the Government of India Act 1919 that "a law made by any authority in British India and repugnant to any provision of this or any other Act of Parliament shall to the extent of that repugnancy but not otherwise be void." One could thus easily see from the above that it would be incompetent to the

Indian Legislature, either Central or Provincial, to pass any laws inconsistent with the provisions of section 112 of the Government of India Act 1919 enjoining the High Courts of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay to administer only the personal law and custom to which the parties are subject in matters of dealing between party and party and any legislation that may be passed by the Indian Legislature contrary to the existing law between the caste Hindus and the untouchables would be null and void being opposed to the express terms of the Parliamentary statute viz. the Government of India Act. 1919.

The position according to Shāstras

Apart from the above legal position against the alleged right of the untouchables to enter into Hindu Temples for worship enjoining the trustees to allow the caste Hindus only a right to temple entry and on which basis several schemes have been already framed by the different Courts in British India which the trustees are bound to carry out according to the law of the land, the matter is covered by clear Shāstric authorities which emphatically deny any such alleged right in favour of the untouchables to entry into the Hindu Temples. It may be stated here at the outset that as it is doubtful whether there were any temples in India in the earliest Vedic times, one cannot find any express authorities in the Vedas on the point in question. However the matters relating to temples, their mode of construction, worship therein and so on have been exhaustively dealt with in the Āgamas and other Smritis and Shāstras which deny the alleged right of the untouchables to temple entry. Thus it is stated in Brighu Samhita that "If a Temple consecrated by the installation therein of a deity is entered into by Chāndālas, the Antyajas (Untouchables), and others born of pratiloma marriages between persons of prohibited castes, the Mlechhas, low-born and degraded persons, guilty of calumny towards the religious head and preceptor and of other faults and particularly by their touch and worship of the deity, the temple becomes polluted¹ Similarly it is stated that "If the class of persons known as Magadhas and others, those born of Pratiloma marriages or others censured of sinful acts, enter into the Court-Yard of a building erected for a temple or into the holy place attached to a temple and set apart

1. (Bṛighu Samhita)

for making offerings to the deity, the said place becomes defiled and requires to be purified by performing a sacrifice therein by way of penance to invoke blessings from the deity and for peace and the idol which is worshipped should be also purified by a water bath a thousand times for appeasing it.'¹ "Or if the idol is defiled by the touch of a Chāndāl, wine, fire, sinful persons remnants of blood and other impure things it should be reinstalled with fresh rites and ceremonies"² It is further laid down that 'The only mode of worship allowed to untouchables persons belonging to degraded castes, and those born of pratiloma marriages, was by a sight of the crest of temples only.'³ It is proposed by the reformers to decide by medium of legislation, the question of the untouchables right to temple entry by a referendum to certain classes of persons residing within certain geographical limits of the particular temple whose names are entered as voters in the Municipal or Local Board register of the city or village in which the said temple is situate and by the opinion of a majority of votes of such persons. It may be stated here that Hindu Temples are not public places like museums or libraries in which every member of the public of any class, creed, or religion is entitled to enter, but the right of entry therein for worship could be decided only according to religious precepts as enjoined by the Hindu Śāstras, traditions and old customs as the matter relates to a purely religious question and the same could not be decided by the opinions of certain persons who are entitled to vote at the election of members to a Municipality or Local Board of the place in which the Temple is situate. The whole idea of deciding the above purely religious question by the method of referendum seems to have been misconceived and based on a complete ignorance of the fundamental principles of Hindu religion and law. It would really be an irony of fate if ever such a proposed legislation is passed, as it would be a great menace to the freedom of conscience and liberty of faith of the orthodox Hindus who constitute the bulk of the Indian populace and their right to worship the deity in any manner they think best. In view of the several inroads recently made by reformers against the Hindu religion from time to time and in view of the fact that incessant agitation is carried on by them to force

1. (Pāṇcharātra). 2. (Hayashirsha Pāṇcharātra) 3. (Śaivāgama).

reforms in religious and social-religious matters on the bulk of the orthodox Hindus even against their wishes by medium of legislation, it is submitted it would be highly necessary and proper that a special clause of religious safeguards should be inserted in the new constitution Act to be passed by the British Parliament for British India in the near future and an express declaration made therein to the effect that there will be no interference either legislative or otherwise in religious matters, either as regards the mode or method of religious worship or the exercise of any of the religious rites and customs enjoyed by the peoples of India hitherto so as to cement happy and warm relations between the Government and the people.

(v) Untouchables in the Buddhist Literature.

Prof. N. K. Dutta gives the following account of the existence of the rule of untouchability in the Buddhist Literature which must have been established by about the fifth century before Christ when there was a definite growth of professional castes (*jātis*) in India. Thus he says. "The Chāndālas were the most despised caste of the society. They were not allowed to live within the walls of a town. Even touching or seeing a Chāndāla caused impurity. In the Mātanga Jātaka, it is related how sixteen thousand Brāhmans lost their caste, because they unknowingly took food which had been polluted by contact with the leavings of a Chāndāla's meal. In the Satadhamma Jātaka, a Brāhman commits suicide because he had eaten the leavings from a Chāndāla's dish. In several Jātakas, we find Brāhmans running away to escape pollution by contact with Chāndālas. This fear of pollution was not confined to Brāhmans alone. A merchant's daughter washes her eyes with scented water and goes away from the place on seeing two Chāndālas. Another Setti (or chetti) girl does the same thing on seeing a Chāndāla at Benares. The Chāndālas were not only despised and kept isolated from society but were distinguished from the rest of the population by their dress as in the Mātanga Jātaka, and also by their speech as in the Chitta Sambhuta Jātaka. So despised were the Chāndālas that "contemptuous as a Chāndāla" was a proverbial expression. Equally low as the Chāndālas were the castes of *Pukkakas* and *Nishādas*." It may be mentioned here as observed by Prof. Dutta that "the Varna division of society was mainly Āryan in character though

accentuated by the peculiar conditions of the early Āryan conquerors in India and that the formation of Jāti castes (i.e. small groups of professional castes) many of which were tribal in origin, together with some of the practices like untouchability, infant marriage etc., was due largely to aboriginal influences." The custom of untouchability also existed definitely in India in the time of the great Chinese traveller Hsüan-tsang who had travelled to India in about 400 A.D. Thus he remarks "Those who clear away filth, have to strike sticks while going about in token of their approach."

(vi) Baffling Extent of Prevalence of untouchability in Southern India due more to Pre-Dravidian influence

As regards the wide extent of the prevalence of untouchability in Southern India Mr S. V. Vishwanatha of Mysore University makes the following observations. Ideas of pollution by touching have gained greater currency in the South than anywhere else in India, for South India has preserved Brāhmaṇical traditions and practices more close than the other parts of the country. Castes in Malabar strike the observer as a baffling phenomenon. There are in that District various grades of castes and sub-castes from the proud or orthodox Brāhmaṇ on the one hand to the lowest Nāyāḍi on the other. The degree of pollution depends on the distance. There are some castes which are looked on by the Nambudri as causing pollution only by touching e.g. the foreign Brāhmaṇ settlers some cause pollution if they come within five or six feet of the artisan class distance of about a hundred feet is necessary in the case of the Izharā the professional toddy-tapper his purity is unimpaired only if twice the distance is kept with the cow-killing Pariah while the Nāyāḍi perhaps the last according to the social stratification in Malabar will have to stand furlongs off and should cry out from the distance as the Asuras of olden times were supposed to do. Pollution by approach finds ample illustration in Malabar. It is in evidence in other parts of India too, and should not be looked upon as of quite recent growth.¹ Tracing the causes which led to the custom and practice of untouchability, the learned author observes.

'Pollution and untouchability resulted primarily out of hygienic,

1. (Racial synthesis in Hindu culture by S. V. Vishwanatha).

physiological, sentimental, and ethical objections. Those castes were declared to be polluting as were accustomed to certain interdicted practices such as the eating of meat and the drinking of liquor. Such of the lower castes as shunned these practices were of course considered to cause less pollution.' It may be mentioned here that even before the coming of the Indo-Aryans into India, there had been great cultural differences among the natives of India including the civilised Drāvidians and the savage pre-Drāvidians living in forest and caves who had not advanced beyond the hunting and fishing stage of culture. Prof. Dutta in this connection observes that "the suggestion of Przyluski (a research scholar) about the origin of the *Doms* of Modern India confirms the belief that the Pre-Drāvidians are to be found in the *Nishādas* and *Chāndālas* etc., of the Vedic literature.' The rule of untouchability is observed by the untouchables themselves to such an enormous extent that persons belonging to certain sub-castes do not touch persons belonging to other sub-castes among them although both are untouchables. Thus a *Dhot* or a *Mahār* (i.e. a scavenger or sweeper of public streets) would not touch a *Bhangī* (i.e. one who removes the night soil and filth). Nor would a person belonging to one sub-caste marry with a person belonging to another sub-caste among the untouchables themselves. It seems that the rule of untouchability as practised at present in its extreme form in certain parts of India is due more to Pre-Dravidian influence than Aryan as stated above and the same requires to be brought into conformity with the more liberal rule as observed by the Vedic Aryans. From this one can see a logical conclusion that untouchability as such had no existence in the form in Vedic times as I have already pointed out above. The Aryans had a scrupulous regard for rules of purity, both in their own and the other regions of their domains and domestic and foreign and they avoided touch of every thing that was considered to be polluting. However, it is true that the number of untouchables was not so large as it is at present among the Aryans. It is also true that the Aryans were not so strict as the Pre-Dravidians in their regard for purity and that they were not so much concerned with the pollution of their own persons as the Pre-Dravidians were. It is also true that the Aryans were not so much concerned with the pollution of their own persons as the Pre-Dravidians were. It is also true that the Aryans were not so much concerned with the pollution of their own persons as the Pre-Dravidians were.

course of time fitting them to associate more freely with the caste Hindus by leading a purer, a better and a more religiously-minded form of life without offending against the principles laid down in the Hindu Shāstras.

(viii) Fundamental differences between backward classes and untouchables,

A great confusion has been caused by many in the discrimination of persons belonging to the backward classes and untouchables and even so great a personage as Gandhiji had only recently published a statement in the press to the effect that the total number of untouchables was 4 crores thus correcting the previous belief about their total number as 6 crores. But even this understanding does not seem to be correct due to a confusion of untouchables with backward classes. The terms 'Untouchables' and 'Backward classes' are not synonymous nor are they convertible with each other. Although the untouchables are backward classes, yet it is not true that the backward classes are all untouchables. The term 'Backward classes' is a generic term of which the untouchables form a species or a variety. Turning to the statistical figures as appearing in the last census return of 1931, one will find that while the total number of Hindus following the Brāhmāṇical religion which included the backward classes is 22,03,08,164 crores, the remaining Hindus not following the Brāhmāṇical religion which inter alia included the untouchables is 1,78,88,275 crores only. The latter class also contains certain aboriginal and other tribes which do not follow the Hindu religion. Therefore the total number of persons who are classed as untouchables amongst the Hindus would hardly amount to even a crore in number. The class known as untouchables comprises therein the castes of *Chāṇḍālas*, *Svapachas* and *Pukkasas* as described in the Vedas and Dharm-shāstras and the present day *Dheds*, *Mahārs*, *Doms*, *Bhangis* and so on. As contrasted with the class of untouchables which formed a small class by itself and which was beyond the pale of the Aryan castes, the backward classes which formed a sub-division of the *Sūdras* were undoubtedly within the four-fold varna division of the Hindus. While persons belonging to the former class were untouchables by birth, those belonging to the latter class were not necessarily so in all respects, so as to require an immediate bath for purification

but some of them were untouchable by degradation to low professions and their impure and unclean habits.

Low and backward castes (Antyajās)

Seven castes along with some others are known in the Smṛities as low and backward castes, viz, a washerman, a cobbler, an actor, a basket-maker (Baruda), a fisherman (Kaivarta) a flesh-seller (Meda) and a hunter¹ By knowing their women, taking their food, and accepting gifts from them willingly, one should perform a Prajapatya Penance for a year and if, unknowingly, two Chāndrayana penances² Carpenters, barbers milkmen, cobblers, potters, traders, users, kīyasthas, flowermen, basket-makers, hunters, Chāndālas, Dāsas, eaters of dog's flesh, kolis and beef-eaters, and those born by Pratiloma marriages belong to the low castes of men (*Antyajās*) A conversation with some of these persons should be expiated by an ablution, while their sight by a sight of the sun.³ Although these were backward and low castes all of them were not necessarily untouchables Thus neither a carpenter nor a kīyastha was an untouchable Having partaken of boiled rice from low-caste persons, twice-born persons should perform a penance⁴ A twice-born person who takes food from a washerman or from an actor or one who lives on bamboo work should perform a Chāndrayana penance⁵ By knowing women of low castes taking their meals and lying with them on the same bed, one should get himself purified with parāka penance⁶ It may be mentioned here that some of the backward castes mentioned above were considered low-castes and were called Asat-Sudras on account of their low professions and impure habits as compared with other Sudras called Sat-Sudras who led a purer and better mode of life. Their touch however was not so polluting as that of a Chāndāla. While the touch of Chāndāla with a twice-born person always demanded an immediate bath on the part of the latter for purification from defilement, the touch of some of the backward castes mentioned above e.g a carpenter kīyastha and so on was not considered so defiling as to require a bath for purification Thus it is stated in Atri that "If a twice-born person has touched out of stupefaction a cobbler, a washerman a bamboo-maker, a fisher-

1. (Ym. S. 54 At. S. 193 Ag. S. 1-3) 2. (At. S. 196). 3. (Vy. S. 1-10 to 12) 4. (Ag. S. 1-2). 5. (At. S. 168). 6. (At. S. 169).

man, or an actor, he should being self-restrained rinse his mouth.¹ By being touched by these, a twice-born person should drink water one night, by being touched by them having the leavings of food in their mouth, he should fast for three nights and get himself purified by drinking clarified butter.² The same law-giver makes a distinction in the case of an untouchable and says that the Brāhman who goes under the shadow of an untouchable (*Swapacha* i.e. an eater of dog's flesh) should bathe and get himself purified by drinking clarified butter.³ Similarly, Yama says "Being touched by a woman in her menses or a person of the degraded castes (*patitas*) in the night, a Brāhman should bathe before the fire, with the water brought during daytime.⁴ The word '*Antyaja*' is used by the sage Samvarta in the sense of an untouchable (*Asprisyā*) belonging to the class of *Chāndālas* or *Antyavasayins* living at the end of the city or village as would appear from the following verse wherein the said law-giver enjoins bath as a purification for touching an *Antyaja*. Thus he says "By touching a *Chāndāla*, an out-cast, a dead body, a person of degraded caste (*Antyaja*), a woman in her menses and a woman in a state of impurity consequent on child birth, one should bathe with clothes on."⁵ This construction drives further support from the fact that according to the well known rule of interpretation, the word *Antyaja* having been used at the end of the first line of the verse last referred to above after enumeration of general words *Chāndāla*, out-cast and so on, it is used in the sense of *eiusdem generis* i.e. of a similar nature to the words previously enumerated and not in a new sense so as to include therein the seven classes of backward castes mentioned above, all of which are not necessarily untouchables in the same sense as a *Chāndāla* and so on.⁶ However the sage Angiras seems to have used the word *Antyaja* in a different sense so as to include therein the seven classes of backward or low castes only beginning with a washerman as described above,⁷ and he prescribes a penance for having partaken of boiled rice from such low-caste persons, but not a bath as a purification for having touched them.⁸ Not even the

1 (At. S 282) 2. (At S 283) 3 (At S 284) 4 (Ym S 63) 5. (Sm. S 178).
 6. (See Maxwell on interpretation of statutes Emp. vs Ratansi Hirji 13 Bom. L R. 581). 7. (Ag. S 1-3) 8. (Ag S. 1-2)

sages Atri and Vyāsa have laid down the need of a bath in such a case¹

Low castes (Antyajas) limited only to seven in number

It may be mentioned here that the low castes described as *Antyajas* in the Dharma Shāstras were only 7 in number beginning with washerman all of whom were not necessarily untouchables like *Chandālas*. Further several other castes as carpenters gardeners and so on enumerated along with these 7 low castes were not low castes (*Antyajas*). Not only so but several other castes mentioned in the long list of backward castes (*Antyajas*) in Vyāsa Smṛiti as *kāpālas*, *trahars* and so on were high caste Āryans like Vaisyas, having all the rights and privileges of Āryans viz right of initiation to the sacred thread right to learn the Vedas to perform sacrifices and so on.

Bogey of untouchability as a political instrument.

It will be seen from the passages from law-books cited above that the statements made by reformers from the platform as well as the press from time to time to the effect, 'That about 6 crores of Hindus (which number is now reduced to 4 crores as admitted by Gandhiji) are untouchables and that unless the rule of untouchability is abolished from Hinduism all these persons would be permanently detached from Hinduism and embrace other faiths and religions and thereby the Hindu Community would be seriously crippled of its numerical strength are not only unfounded but they are also misleading and uncharitable and evidently they seem to have been made to serve purely political and selfish ends of these reformers. The backward classes comprising a few castes leading an impure life and having bad habits are not really untouchables as is sought to be made out by the reformers and the bogey of untouchability in respect of these classes of persons raised by the reformers is a purely political instrument and expedient to serve their own ends, and the recent propaganda carried on by certain leaders to have a statutory recognition of special rights reserved for these backward classes seem to have been made to foster feelings of hatred between classes and classes and support a spirit of communalism pure and simple which is really most detrimental to the truly national interests of our country

¹ (At. S. 282 Vy. S. 1-12).

at this critical juncture when the future constitution of India is about to be shaped into a proper form by His Majesty's British Parliament. In fact several persons belonging to some of these castes have improved in status and are in affluent circumstances and they are not in need of any special protection.

(ix) **Uplift of backward classes and Sūdras.**

The idea of the uplift of backward classes and Sūdras was not a new idea of modern times only, but it was an old idea started by the conquering Āryans in Vedic times of hoary antiquity and which was worked up by them into actual practice for the benefit of these classes of persons. The Āryans had never entertained any idea of extirpating the conquered races of *Dasyus* and *Dāsas* but they imparted to them then high ideas of purity, learning and culture and ultimately, in course of time, they succeeded in elevating the social status of these persons who thenceforward were called *Sūdras* after some generations after they adopted and followed the purer and better modes and habits of the Āryans. Prof. N. K. Dutta in this connection makes the following observations: "During the Rig-Vedic period the Sūdras were mostly war-captives and hence slaves pure and simple. But in the Gangetic plains, it was not captured individuals only but often whole tribes reduced to subjection who became Sūdras. So the word came to mean the non-Āryans in general. In the later Vedic literature, the Sūdra is often contrasted with the Ārya, instead of the Dāsa or Dasyu of the Rig Veda as appears from the following texts: 'Oh, India, object of our praises, let the godless whether he be an Āryan or a Dasyu who wages war against us, be vanquished by us. 'Oh, India come, recognising and marking the distinction of the Dasyu and the Ārya.' Thus the Rishi in the Atharva veda says. 'Make me dear to the gods, dear to the princes, dear to every one who beholds me, both to Sūdras and to Ārya'.¹ Again it is further stated 'By it I see every thing, whether the Sūdra or the Ārya'.² Moreover the greater association of Sūdras in those professions which had been the monopoly of Vaisyas in the Rig Vedic period and the greater intermixture of blood which took place in the rank and file of the population, naturally tended to lessen the distinction between the Vaisya and the Sūdras. Again we know that where there is a mixture of blood, timidity breeds contempt, but that

1. (A. V. 19-21) 2. (A. V. 4-21-2)

where there has been contact, familiarity turns down contempt. The hated Dr. with their ugly different creeds and languages, manners and customs began to be more familiarly treated when they became domestic slaves and on what initiated into the habits and manners of their Aryan master. Thus from the 2nd book of the *Taittiriya Brahmana* we know that the Sudra was already entrusted with some functions to watch the property in one of the most important and sacrosanct of the Aryan, the Ashvamedha or the horse sacrifice. A passage from the *Taittiriya Samhita* still more clearly shows that the Sudra had gained a recognised position in society being worthy of being placed so in respect of his welfare by a Brahman sage and was almost bracketed together with the Vaisya. 'Bestow splendour on our Brahmanes bestow splendour on our nobles bestow splendour on our Vaisyas and Sudras bestow splendour over splendour on me.' Yet there was a limit beyond which the Sudra would not be allowed to stretch. The right of initiation belonged to the Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya but never to the Sudra.¹ He is definitely declared as unfit for sacrifice (*dharmya*) in the Brahmanas.² Some sort of ceremonial impurity was ascribed to the touch of a Sudra on certain sacred and solemn occasions. 'Let not a Sudra milk it out for this Sudra has sprung from non-existence. They say that what a Sudra milks out is no oblation. Let not a Sudra milk out the Agnihotra. For they do not purify that.'³ As regards the fifth class of *Udralas*, *Chandalas* and *Pandakas* the earliest mention of whom is to be found in the *Yajurveda*, according to Prof. Dutta, the latter observes: 'They originally denoted only unclean savage tribes living in hills and forests outside settled habitations. So little amenable to culture were they and such abhorrence did they generate in the minds of Aryans and also probably of the more cultured sections of the non-Aryans that a wall of separation was raised between the men of society and these wild people and they came to form the so-called casteless castes whose occupations were those which could not be followed by the higher classes. The humanitarian idea of elevating by slow and laborious work the cultural level and the standard

1 (T S 5-7-6-4). 2 (S B 3-1-2-10). 3 (S B 3-1-1-10 P B, 6-1-11) 4 (T B, 3-2-3)

of life of these unfortunate peoples, was either under the circumstances impracticable or did not occur to the missionaries of the time. The great contempt with which these people were treated becomes somewhat explicable if we remember that besides being of extremely dirty habits and low-culture, they belonged to a Pre-Dravidian Stock probably Munda-Monkmer race who had remained unabsorbed by the Dravidians, and had been treated as Pariahs even by the latter. This spirit of contempt existed among the Aryanised Dravidians and was taken up from them by the Āryans. This feature of the caste system was evidently not a part of the original Indo-Āryan institution but was a thing borrowed from the Dravidians among whom in the south even in modern times untouchability plays such a prominent part”¹

(x) Elevation of Sūdras and degraded persons to Āryanhood by Vratyastoma Ceremony and the Suddhi (purification) movement

I have already pointed out above that the Dāsas were never directly transformed to the state of Āryanhood but they were first made Sūdras after they had adopted by imitation, the purer and better ways and modes of habits and manners and customs followed by the Āryans in course of several generations. The Āryans had a special ceremony known as the *Vratyastoma* which is described at great length in the Panch Vimsa Brāhmaṇa attached to the Sāma Veda,¹ and by which those persons among the Āryans who had fallen to a degraded mode of life were admitted back into the fold of Āryans. There were several kinds of Vratyastoma ceremonies for purifying persons from different modes of degraded life viz., (1) Those who had fallen to a degraded life from Āryanhood and become Vratyas or fallen by omitting to perform the daily Sandhyā or morning and evening twilight prayers enjoined for every twice-born Āryan and other religious rites and duties (2) those who had been unable to perform the sacred rites incumbent upon them, either on account of young age or old age and (3) those who had been converted from Hindu religion to other religions and faiths and who desired to re-enter into the fold of Āryan religion on performing the necessary cere-

¹Origin of Caste in India by N. K. Dutta 1 (See Caland's Translation of the Panchvimsa Brāhmaṇa Ch. XVII Pp. 454, 458)

(Brahmacharya) on the part of the student and so on, elevating the status, dignity, and position of women in general and giving them a liberal education, including religious learning and implanting in the minds of the people ideas of true nationalism in a constitutional manner.

(xi) Chāndālas (untouchables), antyajās (low castes) and Sūdras (servant class) and their inter-relations

We have already seen above that there were fundamental differences between *Chāndālas* (untouchables) and *Antyajās* (low castes) and the 2 terms were not convertible with each other. While the *Chāndālas* (untouchables) formed a separate class by themselves, the *Antyajās* or low castes formed a part of the *Sūdra* class and belonged to the Āryan race. Further some groups belonging to the fold of *Antyajās* or low castes followed the religious practices, traditions, and customs observed by the Āryans and were distinguished from the other members of their own community by leading a purer mode of life and following better customs and practices. They were not therefore deemed unworthy of social intercourse with the Āryans. Some of the castes enumerated in the long list of low-castes (*Antyajās*) in Vyāsa Smṛiti e.g. carpenters, gardeners, and so on who were *Sat-Sūdras* were not untouchables¹ but they enjoyed the rights and privileges of Āryans, formed an integral part of the Hindu community and did useful services of various kinds to society. The *Chāndālas* being the fifth class formed a distinct and separate class by itself which was outside the pale of the Āryan castes (Varna)

(xii) Two classes of Sūdras, Sat-Sūdras and Asat-Sūdras.

I have already shown above that there were two classes of of Sūdras viz, *Sat-Sūdras* and *Asat-Sūdras*.² The former class of Sūdras viz, *Sat-Sūdras* observed the rules of purity and good conduct as laid down in the Hindu Shāstias and performed several domestic rites and ceremonies as practised by the Āryans but without Vedic Mantras. This class also included persons who were begotten by Āryan males on Sūdra or slave girls (Dāsīs) by anuloma marriages. The latter class of Sūdras on the other hand viz., *Asat-Sūdras* were of impure habits and they led an impure and bad life nor did they perform any rites as observed by the

1. (V. S. 1-11, 12). 2. (Y. S. 1-95)

Aryans. The children of the out-castes from the caste Hindus and
 a new class of impure and unknown progeny by problems
 marriages between Aryan females and Sudra males. Of the several
 kinds of such children the principal class of problems marriages
 the Gṛhhyas declare to be the offspring of marriage between
 a Rikshas female and a Sudra male which was considered very
 filthy and impure. While the Gṛhhyas found the existence of such
 and many other classes of children in the world, which touch and so on
 the subject of the Śāstra of impure persons, it stated the various
 laws to be laid down on account of the impure persons carried
 on by them. The Aryans were not to have any kind of
 intercourse and dealings with the class of persons of impure
 habits and practices on account of their impure origin and impure
 and filthy practices and their conduct was to be strictly in themselves.
 So far as the Śāstra does not come into collision with the elevated
 to the status of Aryans in their practice, they have amount of
 activities performed by them and they had to take repeated
 birth in lower spheres and positions to atone for their sins
 and misdeeds to shed them to be born in the fold of Aryans as
 explained in the Mahābhārata in the dialogue between *Arjuna* and
Krishna who said that a *Chandala* by the union of a *barbarian* with a
Hellion or male *Asura* continued with the *Chandalas* several groups
 of Sudras and persons of low rank to the class of *Ugryas* were elevated
 in course of time after birth to the higher rank and status
 of Śāstra by coming into close contact with Aryans of
 superior culture, learning and purity and following their manners,
 custom and practices. Those among the Aryans who were outcasts
 on account of their neglect to perform religious rites and ceremonies
 and duties incumbent on them, were readmitted into their former
 castes in the fold of Aryans after performing the necessary
 penances prescribed therefor. As regards the regulations laid down
 in the *Manu Smṛiti* prohibiting all social intercourse and
 relations on the part of Aryans with certain classes of persons,
 they related either to *Chandalas* who were the most despicable
 among the untouchables or *Ant-Sudras* who were of impure and bad
 habits. Thus it was laid down by Gotama "He shall not converse with

barbarians (*Mlechhas*), or impure or wicked men,"¹ to which the commentator Haradatta adds a gloss that only a conversation properly so called is forbidden but not a talk asking barbarians about the road and similar matters. On the other hand, the Āryans never showed any aversion towards the *Sat-Sūdras* but they praised them for imitating the practices of virtuous men and studying religious books open to them e.g. *Purāṇas* and so on but without reciting sacred texts.² Manu further says about them "The more a Sūdra keeping himself free from envy imitates the behaviour of the virtuous, the more he gains without being censured, exaltation in this world "³ It is further said by sage Ati that "by following his own religion even a Sūdra enjoys the celestial region Another's religion should be abandoned like the most beautiful wife of another person "⁴ The above description of Sūdras clearly applied to those who led a purer and holier kind of life, and were called *Sat-Sūdras*. They were also allowed in addition to doing service to the twice-born, to carry on mechanical occupations, arts, industries, handicrafts and other professions such as trade and agriculture as means of livelihood in distressed times, although some of these professions were specially reserved for Vaisyas (trading class), thus elevating the *Sat-Sūdras* to the social rank of Vaisyas ⁵

Exploitation of Sūdras and low-caste men by the reformers

The high caste Hindus have never interfered with the peculiar professions open to the Sūdras and low-caste men and it is really unfortunate that of late some reformers have begun to exploit these persons belonging to low-castes by depriving them of their professions e.g. laundries, tanneries, hair cutting saloons and so on which are captured by some of these reformers to the great detriment of these poor persons

(xiii) Elevation of status of Sat-Sūdras and persons of low-castes of pure habits and special rights accorded to some of them by way of exception

The relations between the Āryans and the Sūdras were very cordial from the very commencement and there was no love lost between them It may be further mentioned here that although

1. (G. D. S 9-16). 2 (M S. 10-127) 3 (10-125) 4 (At S 18).
 5. (M. S. 10-99, 100, At S 15, P. S 2-15)

the Sudras were not generally entitled to study the Vedas or perform Vedic sacrifices and other rites accompanied with Vedic Mantras, exceptions were made even in Vedic times in the case of some of them known as *Sat-Sūdras* who were allowed certain special rights and privileges. Thus a *Rathakāra* or a chariot-maker was entitled to keep holy fire (Agni Ādī āna) for a sacrifice for the rainy season although he was not twice-born but a Sudra.¹ Similarly a *Nishāda śhapati* or a chief belonging to the tribe of Nishāda (a low and wild tribe of Bheel) was considered entitled to perform Raudra Yāga sacrifice although he was not a twice-born person.² Likewise we find in the Rāmāyana that the divine incarnation Shri Rāma, when he had started on his way to the forest being banished there by his father king Dasharatha he was given a very warm reception and a close embrace by *Gula*, the King of Nishādas, (an aboriginal race of low caste e.g. Bheel but not a Chāndala).³ We also find in the Vedas that in exceptional cases certain Sndras (*Sat-Sūdras*) by virtue of their leading a religious and moral life were actually elevated to the status and position of Rishis which was generally reserved to Brāhmanas. Thus *Kakshivan* who was begotten by the sage Dirghantamas on a maid servant of king Swanaya was respected as a Rishi and a seer of certain hymns of the Rig Veda although he was a Sudra.⁴ Similarly *Kavasha Atusha* who was the son of a Brahman by a slave-girl (Dāsi) was also revered as a Rishi and a seer of certain other hymns in the same Veda.⁵ Further *Vidur* who was the author of a treatise on morals is praised very highly in the Mahābhārata although he was begotten by the sage Veda Vyāsa on a maid servant (Dāsi). Lastly we have the further instance of *Dharma Vyādha* who although he was a flesh vendor and belonged to a very low class was highly respected on account of his piety and highly religious and moral life. Thus shows that the Āryans were not slow in recognising merit wherever it existed even in Sndras and persons of low-castes but who led a pure and pious life. The cases cited above were however exceptional and not normal. These pious souls were respected on account of their superior learning and pure habits acquired by them by the religious tendencies inherited by them from their past lives. It may

1 (J. S. 6-1-44 to 50). 2 (J. S. 6-1-51 52). 3 (Rāmāyana 2-50 35 40).
4 (R. V. 1-116 to 120). 5 (R. V. 10-30 to 34, A. B. 8-1).

be stated here that although Vedic learning was not imparted to the Sūdras and low castes, yet religious instructions were imparted to them from the Purāṇas and the two Epics, Rāmāyana and Māhābhārata which were always open to them. Besides the path of devotion as taught by our Lord Shri Krishna in the Gītā was specially thrown open to Sūdras and women and even to the worst sinners. Thus it is stated in the Gītā "Finding refuge in me, they also who may be of sinful birth, women, Vaisyas as well as Sūdras—even they attain to the Supreme Goal."¹ Further Lord Shri Krishna has stated in the Gītā "The same I am to all beings; to me there is none hateful or dear, but who worship me with devotion they are in me and I am also in them."² This principle is in consonance with the Upanishadic doctrine of Advaita or non-dual monism according to which there is unity in variety and the supreme spirit of God-head extends universally in all, including even the worst sinner, though veiled in cloudy ignorance of the latter which requires to be enlightened by following the precepts laid down in the Shāstras. It will thus appear from the above that according to the Gītā and the Hindu Shāstras, there is no question of any hatred or apathy towards any castes whether Sūdras or backward classes who are all integral parts of the body corporate of the Hindu community. The Sūdras are enjoined to do useful services to the society as a whole in a spirit of loving co-operation and devotion to the Lord in conformity with the religious precepts as laid down in the Shāstras so as to foster feelings of a real brotherhood and unity in the Hindu society.

(xiv) Growing spirit of communalism harmful to the growth of true nationalism and unity

The Hindus have lived with these classes of poor persons viz., Sūdras and persons belonging to low castes since generations past most peacefully and in harmony without any conflict with them until recently when seeds of rank communalism were implanted in their minds by certain persons out of political and similar considerations. Such spirit of communalism unless checked in time is bound to develop and result into internal dissensions and discords between classes and classes of the Hindu community,

¹ 1 (B. G. 9-32). ² 2. (B. G. 9-29)

thus crippling the solidarity and unity of the Hindu community as a nation. It may be pointed out here that some low castes as those carrying on the business of laundries tanneries and so on, have risen to affluent circumstances and they cannot be treated as backward classes any more being no longer in need of any special protection.

(13) Punishments and penalties for religious offences and sins

(1) Sin due to a transgression of the divine laws

We have seen above that every part of a Hindu's life was governed by minute rules and regulations relating to piety and good conduct which were laid down in the Dharma Shastras to preserve the racial purity of the Āryans and any infraction of the said rules and regulations entailed the performance of certain penances as laid down in the Dharma Shastras by way of atonement for the sins resulting from the commission of religious offences. The religious offences were committed by a violation of the divine laws laid down for the guidance of the Āryans. The idea of sin as resulting from violation of the divine laws appears definitely stated in the hymns addressed to God Varuna—the supreme presiding deity of the moral law in the Rig Veda. God Varuna is described in the Rig Veda as a self-dependent monarch (Svraj) as well as a universal ruler.¹ The epithet 'māyī' (i.e. one possessed of occult power) is also applied to him. His personality is more fully developed as the moral God as well as the great Lord of the laws of nature. His ordinances which governed gods, men and things alike cannot be transgressed.² It is by his law that the heaven and earth are held apart.³ He is also called 'Ritasya Gopta' or guardian of law and order and 'Ritavat' or 'the observer of order'. God Varuna is the only God who is so frequently prayed to in the Rig Veda to forgive and destroy the sins that man may have committed through thoughtlessness or ignorance. This sentiment is beautifully expressed in the following hymns of the Rig Veda: "Somelhow through weakness of my will, I went astray, shining one be gracious mighty Lord and spare."⁴ "Whatever wrong we men commit against the race of heavenly ones O Varuna whatever law of thine, we here

1. (R. V. 8-42-1) 2. (R. V. 8-41-7). 3. (R. V. 6-70-1) 4. (R. V. 7-80-3).

have broken through thoughtlessness, for that transgression, do not punish us O God ”¹ Merciful to penitents, he is angry with those who transgress his laws ² His punishment of the sinful is as severe as his bounties are plentiful ³ He binds with fetters and inflicts disease and death on evil-doers, while he frees those who humbly pray to him for forgiveness for their sins as also for the sins committed by their fathers and ancestors The committing of sin also leads to disease and death ⁴ Sin is committed by killing or cursing,⁵ deceiving⁶ and by inordinate indulgence in drink, anger, or dice, and his forgiveness is obtained by confession,⁷ prayer for remission of penalty,⁸ by oblations and sacrifices⁹ and by hymns of praise.”¹⁰ “The Ordinances of Varuna are unchangeable and even the gods must follow them ¹¹ Hence he is called ‘Dhritavrat’ (i.e. one whose ordinances are fixed ”¹² This would clearly show to the reader how high was the veneration paid by the Āryans to the divine laws which must be obeyed by them as their paramount duty and any transgression of the same incurred the highest displeasure and wrath of the supreme lord who inflicted a heavy punishment on the sinners for the sins committed by them unless they were atoned for by a candid and full confession of the same and a performance of the special penances prescribed therefor. The Supreme God of Justice as conceived by the Vedic Āryans was not an autocrat who dispensed his divine fiat from his Royal throne in the highest heaven in an arbitrary manner according to his whims and caprices, punishing the offenders in a vindictive manner and giving special rewards to the chosen few belonging to a particular sect or creed who followed the dogmas as laid down in their respective sects or creeds But He was a just and merciful God who was above petty considerations of caste, creed or sect. The justice dispensed by the Supreme Lord was in exact accordance with definite laws whether moral or natural and it was also tempered with mercy according to the penitence and genuine remorse displayed by the delinquent

1. (R. V. 7-89-5) 2. (R. V. 7-86-2, 3, 7, 1-25-2). 3. (R. V. 7-88-1).
 4. (R. V. 7-86-4) 5. (R. V. 1-41-8) 6. (R. V. 2-27-16) 7. (R. V. 7-86-6).
 8. (R. V. 7-86-5). 9. (R. V. 1-24-14) 10. (See Religion in Vedic literature by Dr. P. S. Deshmukha). 11. (R. V. 8-41-7). 12. (R. V. 1-25-8, 10).

(II) Theories of punishment.

Law and punishment as instruments to preserve
Peace and Order

Law and punishment were instruments to preserve peace and order.¹ Punishment alone governs all created beings, punishment alone protects them punishment watches over them while they sleep the wise declare punishment to be identical with law.² 'If the king did not without tiring inflict punishment on those worthy to be punished, the stronger would roast the weaker like fish on a spit.'³ The whole world is kept in order by punishment, for a guiltless man is hard to find through fear of punishment the whole world yields the enjoyment which it owes.⁴ Even the gods perform the respective functions assigned to them for the good and protection of the universe by fear of punishment.⁵ It is thus laid down in the Upanishads 'Through fear the fire warms, through fear the sun shines through fear move Indra the wind, and death as the fifth.'⁶ 'Let the king act with justice in his own domain, with rigour chastise his enemies and behave without duplicity towards his friends.'⁷ The fame of a king who behaves thus spreads in the world like a drop of oil on water.⁸ But the fame of a king who acts in a contrary manner diminishes in extent like a drop of clarified butter in water.⁹ The king has been created to be the protector of the castes and orders (*Dharma*) who all according to their rank discharge their several duties.¹⁰ A king who properly inflicts punishment prospers but he who is voluptuous, partial and deceitful will be destroyed even through the unjust punishment which he inflicts.¹¹ Vena Nahusha and others.¹²

Retributive Theory

The retributive theory of punishment traces the origin of Justice to the instinct of vengeance as appears stated in the maxim "a tooth for a tooth an eye for an eye, and a life for a life."¹³ Punishment is an end in itself according to this theory and the wrong done by one must be paid in his own coin in order that

1. (M S 7-18) 2 (7-20). 3 (7-22) 4 (7-23) 5 (K. U 6-3 T U 2-8).
6. (M S. 7-32). 7 (7-33). 8. (7-34). 9 (7-35). 10 (7-27) 11 (7-41).
12. (Mayne's criminal law of India).

justice may be vindicated. Though the retributive theory of punishment savours of an element of savagery and barbarism, yet its value has been emphasised by such a great personage as Kant who is recognised as one of the greatest philosophers of the modern time. Kant makes the following observations on the point 'Juridical punishment can never be administered merely as a means for promoting another good, either with regard to the criminal himself or to civil society but must in all cases be imposed only because the individual on whom it is inflicted has committed a crime. The penal law is a categorical imperative and woe to him who creeps through the serpent windings of utilitarianism to discover some advantage that may discharge him from the Justice of punishment or even from the due measure of it.'¹ The retributive theory proceeds on the principle of the intrinsic value of punishment as a vindication of justice and cannot be lightly brushed aside in all cases but it holds good even today in cases of murder when the culprit who is found guilty and convicted of the offence, is sentenced to a punishment of death.

The deterrent or preventive theory.

The deterrent or preventive theory of punishment proceeds on the view that punishment is never an end in itself but it is merely a means whereby some good may be reached. According to this theory, punishment is made to frighten others from doing wrong. The robber is sent to the jail not because the offence deserves punishment but because others may be prevented from committing such offences. This theory is utilitarian in principle.

The reformatory or educative theory.

The last theory is known as the reformatory or educative theory. It proceeds on the view that the object of punishment is not so much to punish the offender as to educate him and improve his character in future. This theory like the last one is also utilitarian or teleological having some purpose in view to realise which punishment is meted out to the offender. Whatever may be the merits and demerits of the above theories, it is quite clear that the amount of punishment is never fixed on any retributive standard but it is

1. (Kant's philosophy of law tr. by Hastie P. 195).

always fixed on utilitarian considerations. In giving punishment to an offender an account is always taken of the motive and intention with which the offence was committed. As against the reformatory theory, it may be stated that if punishment is meted out with a view to improvement only then punishment loses its force altogether. Punishment is no punishment at all unless it is vindictive of the dignity of law. The end of punishment however was prevention of crime, and so punishment should never be severe or out of vindictiveness. 'In meting out punishment to the offender, three things are taken into consideration viz., to vindicate the dignity of law, to purify the guilty and to strike terror into the heart of others. It is only when a particular crime becomes rampant that rougher punishments come into play.' If punishments are unduly severe and vindictive, they lose all chance of improving the character and conduct of the delinquent and make him more callous and blunt than before. In meting out punishments to offenders all the above theories are therefore taken into consideration.

(III) Primitive Punishments.

In olden times punishments were private and revengeful but a great step forward was taken when the sphere of private revenge was supplanted by the authority of State. We find that the system of wergild (*Vardeya*) was in vogue in Vedic times¹ according to which the offender had to pay fines of varying amount for murder, culpable homicide and other crimes against person by paying which the offender was free from all further punishment. The payment of fine for killing a man varied very much it often took the form of handing over a number of cows to the relatives of the person injured². Among other forms of punishment then prevalent there was the ordeal of red-hot-axe which had to be held by the offender in his hands and he was held innocent if he escaped burning but he was held guilty of the offence if his hands felt marks of burning³. In some cases the punishment was binding the offender to posts⁴ or death. There is a reference (in the Vedas) to a prison,⁵ to fetters of iron,⁶ to ordeals of fire water and a

1 (R. V 5-61-8) 2. (A. D S 1-9-24-1 to 4). 3 (Ch. U 6-16).
 4 (A. V 10-47-9). 5 (R. V 4 12-5). 6 (A. V 6-68-2).

combat.¹ Thieves were to be severely beaten.² The Atharvaveda calls for a very horrible punishment on a man for injuring a Brāhman's cow viz crushing his bones and dislocating all his limbs.³ "A first offender should be let off with a warning, an offender who is guilty twice should be let off with a strong censure, one who has committed the offence for a 3rd time should be punished with a fine; while death, corporal punishment or mutilation of a limb was the penalty for one who had committed the same crime for the fourth time.⁴ It may be mentioned here that the criminal law as laid down in the Scriptures and the Dharma Shāstras has been supplanted by the Indian Penal code being Act 45 of 1860.

(iv) Punishment of fines

Fining was the most conspicuous mode of punishment in former times. "Fining was inflicted as a punishment for giving false evidence,⁵ for non-payment of debt,⁶ and for misappropriation of property.⁷ Punishment in those days varied according to the castes of the offenders. Thus the fine for the life of a Kshatriya was 1000 cows; for a Vaisya 100 cows and 10 for a Sūdra. But the crime of killing a Brāhman was too heinous to be punished with a fine merely. A Brāhman using abusive language to a Kshatriya was liable to a fine of 50 Panas, in the case of a Vaisya the fine shall be 25 Panas, in the case of a Sūdra 12 Panas. But a Kshatriya, a Vaisya and a Sūdra guilty of the same offence against a Brāhman were liable to a fine of 100 Panas, a fine of 150 to 200 Panas and a corporal punishment respectively.⁸ Although the above mode of discriminative and varying punishments according to the castes of the offenders does not appear to be just and satisfactory from the standpoint of modern system of administration of justice, yet as Mr. Buch puts it in his Hindu Ethics "it should never be forgotten that the Hindu law-makers at the same time lay down that in proportion to the greater knowledge of the delinquent, guilt is greater. Thus we read in Shāntiparva that if great men transgress (the law), their chastisement should be proportionate to their greatness."⁹ Manu also says in this connection

1. (R. V. 1-158-4, 5) 2. (A. V. 4-3-5). 3. (A. V. 12-5-65 to 71).
 4. (M. S. 8-129, 130, Y. S. 1-366, 367). 5. (8-120, 121) 6. (8-139) 7. (8-264).
 8. (M. S. 8-267, 268) 9. (M. B. S. P. Ch. 273, Hindu Ethics by Mr. Buch).

"For having committed a theft a Sudra cognisant of the law shall be punished with a fine eight times the usual one in value a Vaisya with a fine sixteen times a Kshatriya with a fine thirty-two times and a Brahmana with a fine 64, 100 or 125 times the usual one in value"¹ Mr R C Dutta also observes in this connection "Manners x x x change with times and many portions of the institutes of Manu have ceased to be operative in their present day in their entirety The draconic severity of the law towards Sudras was probably never reduced to practice even in the days of Brahman supremacy, and all distinctions in punishment based on caste, certainly ceased to have operation after the Mohammedan conquest of India."

(v) Corporal punishments

"Corporal punishments were prescribed for assault² and for cases of theft³ Mutilation of limbs and even capital punishment were the lot of thieves of valuable property⁴ A robber deserves a worse punishment⁵ A man incurs the penalty of having his fingers cut off if he is guilty of rape⁶ An adulterous woman is liable to be devoured by dogs in a place frequented by many⁷ Very cruel punishments involving mutilation of limbs were inflicted on adulterers."⁸

(vi) Penances for sins and religious offences by way of purification.

A man who omits a prescribed act, or performs a blamable act or cleaves to sensual enjoyments must perform a penance otherwise he goes to hell For purification therefore penance should be performed by him in this world The inner self of such a man as well as the world become pleased⁹ All sages have prescribed a penance for a sin committed unintentionally while some declare on the evidence of revealed texts that it may be performed even for an intentional offence A sin unintentionally committed is expiated by the recitation of Vedic texts but that which men in their folly commit intentionally is expiated by various special penances. According to sage Yajñamalkya a sin committed knowingly is not

1 (M S 8-337-8) 2 (R. C Dutta's history of civilization in Ancient India Vol. III P 109) 3. (M S. 8-280 to 283). 4 (8-322 325) 5 (8-334 322 323) 6 (8-345). 7 (8-367). 8 (8-371). 9 (8-370 to 383 Hindu Ethics by M. A. Buch) 10 (M. S. 11-44, V D S. 20-1 to 3 and 22 Y S 3-219 320).

expiated by a penance but by virtue of a text he can associate with his community¹ A man is polluted by a vile action, e.g. sacrificing for men unworthy to offer a sacrifice, eating forbidden food, speaking what ought not to be spoken, neglecting what is prescribed and practising what is forbidden² The guilt (*Adharma*) contracted by the deed is not effaced before it has produced its result in the shape of punishment in hell and in other births.³ The most excellent opinion is that he shall perform a penance.⁴ For it is declared in the Veda that he who has offered a *Punastoma* may again come to partake of the libations of Soma.⁵ Likewise he who has offered a *Viātyastoma* which was a special rite for expiating the sins resulting from leading a degraded life and omitting to perform obligatory and other religious rites enjoined for the twice born.⁶ The Veda says further that he who has offered a horse sacrifice conquers all sins, he destroys the guilt of the murder of a *Brahman*⁷ Foreseeing that in Kali Yuga, men will be more religious and impious, the omniscient sage *Pārāśara* has dealt with the subject of Penances and purifications at great length in his law book which is specially meant for the present Kali age and he concludes by stating that "all sins are extinguished through the practice of *Chāndrāyana* or *Tulāpurusha* which is an 8 days penance in which the delinquent had to live on one kind of food only for 5 days e.g washed rice water, whey, barley meal and so on and to fast for 3 days as well as by living on barley diet, or by following the cows to pasturage⁸ By carefully taking into account time and place, age and ability and the nature of the crime one should lay down the penitential rite.⁹ If a person refused to perform any penance, his own kinsmen should make the female servant of such an outcast, carry his water vessel filled with water to the outskirts of the village and ostracise him from all social and religious works¹⁰

Austerities (*Tapa*), Gifts (*Dāna*) and sacrifices (*Yajna*), the great purifiers from sin

It is laid down by our Lord Śrī Krishna in the *Gītā* that sacrifice (*Yajna*), gift (*Dāna*), and austerities (*Tapa*) are the three

1 (M S 11-45, 46, Y S 3-226) 2. (G D S 19-2) 3. (G D S 19-5)
 4 (G D. S 19-6) 5 (19-7) 6 (19-8) 7 (19-9). 8. (P. S 12-72,
 Y. S. 3-322) 9 (Y S 3-293) 10. (Y S 3-294)

great punishment from sin.¹ He study the Veda, sacrifices (*Tapo*) a sacrifice (1 to 5), fasting and maiming, after (*Dana*) at the means for expiating a blamable act.² The purificatory texts are the Upanishads, the Vedānta, the Samhitā text of all the Vedas, the Anuvākas called Mallin, the hymns of Aghamarshana, the Atharva hymn, the Anuvākas called the Indra and Purusha hymn, the Samhitā, the Purāṇa and the Śaṅkara.³ To live on milk alone, to eat vegetable only, to eat fruit only, to live on barley, gruel prepared of a handful of grain, to eat 2/3 to eat clarified butter and to drink Soma are modes of living which purify men from sin.⁴ All mountains, all rivers, holy lakes, places of pilgrimage, the dwellings of Pishā, ceyres and temples of the gods are places which destroy sin.⁵ Caturāśrakāra, the truth, bathing morning, noon, and evening, standing in wet clothes, sleeping on the ground and fasting are the virtuous links of austerities (*Tapo*).⁶ Gold, a cow, a deer, a horse, land, garments, clarified butter and food are the gifts (*Dāna*) which destroy sin.⁷ The periods of penances vary from 1 year to 6 months, 4 months, 3 months, 2 months, 1 month, 24 days, 12 days, 6 days, 3 days, a day and a night.⁸ These acts may be optionally performed when no particular penance has been prescribed.⁹ For great sins (*Mahāpātaka*) difficult penances are prescribed and for trivial faults easy ones are prescribed.¹⁰ The Ārāṇyaka, the Iti-Ārāṇyaka and Āśvamedhikā are seven penances prescribed for all offences.¹¹ In consequence of a remnant of the guilt of former crimes, persons are born idiots, dumb, blind, deaf and deformed who are all despised by the virtuous.¹² Penances therefore must always be performed for the sake of purification because those whose sins have not been expiated, are born again with disgraceful marks.¹³

**Repentance after confession and a determination
not to commit sin in future essential elements
of all penances and purifications.**

Mere performance of penances and purifications as proscribed in the Śāstras is of no effect unless it is coupled with a confession

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|--------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 (B G 18-2) | 2 (G B S. 10-11) | 3 (ibid 10-12) | 4 (10-13) |
| 5 (10-14) | 6 (10-15) | 7 (10-16) | 8 (10-17) |
| 9 (10-18) | 10 (10-19) | 11 (10-20) | 12 (M S. 11-57) |
| | | | 13 (11-24) |

and a genuine remorse from the heart and a determination not to commit the sin in future. By confession, by repentance, by austerity, and by reciting the Veda, a sinner is freed from guilt, and in case no other course is possible by liberality.¹ In proportion as a man who has done wrong himself confesses it, even so far he is freed from guilt, as a snake from its slough.² Hence one should confess the sin committed by him before the synod of learned Brāhmans (*Vidvat Parishad*) and perform the penance laid down by them.³ In proportion as his heart loathes his evil deed, so far is his body freed from that guilt.⁴ He who has committed a sin and has repented is freed from sin, but he is purified only by a determined resolution of ceasing to commit sin and thinking 'I will do no more.'⁵ Having thus considered in his mind what will arise from his deeds after death, let him always be good in thoughts, speech and actions.⁶ He who having unintentionally or intentionally committed a reprehensible deed, desires to be freed from the guilt of it, must not commit it a second time.⁷ If his mind be uneasy with respect to any act, let him repeat the austerities prescribed as a penance for it until they fully satisfy his conscience.⁸

Value of austerities.

All the bliss of gods and men is declared by the sages to whom the Veda was revealed, to have austerity for its root, austerity for its middle and austerity for its end.⁹ The pursuit of sacred knowledge is the austerity of a Brāhman, protecting the people is the austerity of a Kshatriya, the pursuit of his daily business is the austerity of a Vaisya and service is the austerity of a Sūdra.¹⁰ Sages who control themselves and subsist on fruit, roots, and an, survey the 3 worlds through their austerities alone.¹¹ Medicines, good health, learning, and the various divine stations are attained by austerities alone, for austerity is the means of gaining them.¹² Both those who have committed mortal sins (*Mahāpātaka*) and all other offenders are severally freed from their guilt by means of well-performed austerities.¹³ Whatever sin men commit by thoughts, words or deeds, that they speedily burn away by penance, if they

1. (M. S. 11-228, P. S. 9-62) 2. (11-229) 3. (P. S. 9-62) 4. (M. S. 11-230)
 5. (11-231) 6. (11-232) 7. (11-233) 8. (11-234) 9. (11-235)
 10. (11-236) 11. (11-237) 12. (11-238) 13. (11-240)

keep penance as their only riches¹ The gods accept the offerings of that Brāhmin only who has purified him self by austerities, and grant to him all he desires²

(vii) Classes of difficult penances

Krichehra Ati-Krichehra and Chāndrāyana penances for expiating sins

For the expiation of offences for which no atonement has been prescribed let him fix a penance after considering the offender's strength and the nature of offence³ The difficult penances prescribed in the Dharma Shāstras for expiating different sins committed by a person are *Krichehra* *Tapta Krichehra*, *Iti-Krichehra* and *Chāndrāyana* which rise in severity according to the gravity of the sins and offence⁴

Prājapatya Krichehra penance

As regards the *Prājapatya Krichehra* penance revealed by Prajapati, the twice born who performs it for expiating a sin committed by him shall during the first three days eat in the morning only food fit for offerings and fast in the evening Next he shall eat food fit for offerings during another period of three days in the evening only Next during another period of 3 days he shall not ask anybody for food Next he shall fast during another period of three days⁵

Sāntapana Krichehra

Subsisting on *Panchagavya* consisting of the urine of cows, cow-dung milk sour-milk, and clarified butter and a decoction of kusha grass and fasting during one day and night that is called a *Sāntapana Krichehra*⁶

Tapta Krichehra penance.

A Brāhmin who performs a *Tapta Krichehra* penance, must drink hot water hot milk, hot clarified butter and inhale hot air, each during three days, and bathe once with a concentrated mind⁷

A Parāka Krichehra.

A fast for 12 days by a man who controls himself and commits no mistakes is called a *Parāka Krichehra* which removes all guilt⁸

1 (11-242). 2 (11-243) 3 (M S. 11-210 211) 4 (M S. 11-212, G D S. 20-2 to 5, A D S. 1-27-7 V D S. 21-20, Y S. 3-310) 5 (11-213, Y S. 3-314). 6 (11-215 Y S. 3-317). 7 (11-216, Y S. 3-320).

Ati-Kṛichchra

A twice-born person who performs the *Ati-Kṛichchra* penance must take his food during three periods of three days in the manner described above but one mouthful only at each meal and fast during the last three days¹ He who desires to be purified quickly shall stand during the day and sit during the night. He shall speak the truth. He shall not converse with any body but Āryans. He shall daily sing the two Sāmans. He shall bathe in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, reciting the 3 prescribed verses and he shall dry himself reciting the prescribed purificatory verses (Pāvamāni) Next he shall offer libations of water. The worship of the sun must be performed with the prescribed texts. Offerings of clarified butter must be made with the help of the same texts. At the end of the period of 12 days, he shall eat boiled rice and make offerings to the deities Agni (fire), Soma, Agni and Soma, Indra and Agni, to Indra, to all the gods, to Brahman, to Prajāpati, and to Agni svista Krit. Afterwards he must feed Brāhmins. By the above rules, the *Ati-Kṛichchra* penance has been explained. When he performs that, he shall eat only as much as he can take at one mouthful²

Kṛichchra Ati-Kṛichchra.

The Third Kṛichchra is that where water is the only food and it is called *Kṛichchra Ati-Kṛichchra* (or the most difficult penance). According to Gotama the period of this penance is 12 days only but according to Yājñavalkya, it is 21 days. He who has performed the first of these three, becomes pure, sanctified, and worthy to follow the occupations of his caste. He who has performed the second is freed from all sins which he commits excepting great or mortal sins (*Mahāpātakas*). He who performs the third removes all guilt. Now he who performs these three Kṛichchras becomes perfect in all the Vedas and known to all the gods. Likewise he who knows this³

Chāndrāyana penance

The *Chāndrāyana* or the lunar penance is the most difficult penance which is prescribed for expiating the most heinous offences.

1. (11-214, Y. S. 3-319). 2. (G. D. S. 26-6 to 15). 3. (G. D. S. 26-20 to 25 Y. S. 3-320).

If one diminishes one's food daily by one mouthful during the dark half of the month and increases it in the same manner during the bright half and bathes daily at the time of three libations (morning noon and evening) that is called the lunar penance or *Chāndrayana*.¹ The general rules prescribed for a Kṛticchira penance are applicable to the Chāndrayana. The hair must be shaved in case it is performed as a penance. He shall fast on the day preceding the full moon. And he shall offer libations of water, oblations of clarified butter, consecrate the sacrificial Vands and worship the moon reciting the prescribed Mantras of the Iti Veda.² He shall offer clarified butter reciting the 4 prescribed Mantras. And at the end of the offering of clarified butter, he shall offer pieces of sacred fuel reciting certain holy texts. Each mouthful of food must be consecrated by the mental recitations of one of following words: Om Bhuh Bhuvah, Svah, austerity, truth, fame, prosperity, vigour, refreshment, strength, lustre, soul, law, 'Siva'. Or he may consecrate all of them at once saying Adoration Svāha. The size of the mouthful shall be such as not to cause a distortion of the mouth in swallowing it. The sacrificial Vands are boiled rice, too! obtained by leaching, ground barley-gruel, vegetables, milk, sour milk, clarified butter, roots, fruits and water among the 6 each succeeding one is preferable to those enumerated earlier. He shall eat on the day of full moon 15 mouthfuls and during the dark half of the month daily diminish his portion by one mouthful. He shall fast on the day of the new moon, and during the bright half of the month daily increase his portion by one mouthful. According to some the order shall be inverted, i.e. the performer may begin with the fast on the day of the new moon. That is called a month occupied by the *Chāndrayana* penance. He who has completed that, becomes free from sin and free from crime and destroys all guilt. He who has completed a second month living according to the above rule sanctifies himself, his ten ancestors and ten descendants as well as any company to which he may be invited. And he who has lived for a year according to that rule dwells after death in the world of the moon.³ He who performs the lunar penance of ascetics shall eat during a

1. (M S 11-217 & S. 3 323).

2. (R V 1-91-17; 1-91-18, 10-85-19).

3. (G D S 27-1 to 18).

month daily at mid-day, eight mouthfuls, controlling himself and consuming sacrificial food only¹ If a Brāhman with concentrated mind, eats during a month daily 4 mouthfuls in a morning and 4 after sun set, that is the lunar penance of children.² He who concentrating his mind eats during a month in any way thrice eighty mouthfuls of sacrificial food, dwells after death in the world of the moon.³ The Rudras, likewise the Adityas, the Vasus, and the Maruts, together with the great sages, practised this rite in order to remove all evil⁴ Bunt oblations must daily be made by the penitent himself, and he must abstain from injury to sentient creatures, speak the truth, and keep himself free from anger and from dishonesty.⁵ Let him bathe three times each day and thrice each night, dressed in his clothes, let him on no account while performing the penance talk to women, Sūdras, and outcasts.⁶

(viii) Classification of sins, as Mahāpātakas (great sins)

Upapātakas and other minor sins.

Mahāpātakas or great sins.

The following sins are called *Mahāpātakas* or the great mortal sins viz., killing a Brāhman, drinking the liquor called Surā or wine, stealing the gold of a Brāhman, adultery with a Guru's (teacher's) wife, and association with men who have committed these offences⁷ These sins involved a loss of caste For the above first four great sins, if they do not perform the prescribed penance, let him inflict corporal punishment and fines in accordance with the law⁸ For violating a Guru's bed, a mark shall be impressed on the forehead with a hot iron, for drinking the spirituous liquor called Surā, (wine) the sign of a tavern (i.e. a wine-cup), for stealing the gold of a Brāhman a dog's foot, and for murdering a Brāhman a headless corpse⁹ Excluded from all fellowship at meals, excluded from instruction and from matrimonial alliances, abject and excluded from all religious duties, let them wander over this earth.¹⁰ Such persons who have been branded with indelible marks must be cast off by their relations and receive neither compassion nor a salutation, that is the teaching of Manu¹¹ But men of all castes who perform the

1. (M. S. 11-219) 2. (11-220) 3. (11-221). 4. (11-222) 5. (11-223).

6. (11-224). 7. (M. S. 9-235, 11-55, V. D. S. 1-19 to 21, G. D. S. 21-1 to 10).

8. (M. S. 9-236). 9. (9-237) 10. (9-238). 11. (9-239).

prescribed penances must not be branded on the forehead by the king but must be made to pay the highest amercement or fine.¹ For such offences, if committed by a Brahman the middlemost amercement shall be inflicted or he may be banished from the realm keeping his money and chattels.² If men of castes other than that of Brahman, have unintentionally committed such crimes they ought to be deprived of their whole property. If they committed the crimes, intentionally they shall be banished.³ The most terrible punishment was prescribed for drinking wine viz., the drinker was made to drink hot boiling liquor until he was completely scalded.⁴ Falsely giving information to the king regarding a crime and falsely accusing one's teacher are offences equal to slaying a Brahman.⁵ Reviling the Veda, giving false evidence, slaying a friend, and eating forbidden food are offences equal to drinking wine.⁶ Stealing a deposit or men, horse, silver, land, diamonds and other gems is declared to be equal to stealing the gold of a Brahman.⁷ Carnal intercourse with sisters by the same mother with unmarried maidens with females of the lowest castes, with the wives of a friend or of a son, they declare to be equal to the violation of a Guru's bed.⁸

Upapātakas or less grave sins and offences causing loss of caste (Jatibrahman)

Among Upapātakas or less grave sins, we find slaying kine, sacrificing for those who are unworthy to sacrifice adultery selling one-self, casting off one's teacher, mother, father or son giving up the daily study of the Veda, and neglecting the sacred domestic fire,⁹ defiling a damsel, usury breaking a vow, and selling one's wife or child¹⁰ living as a Virātya (i.e. one who has fallen by neglecting all obligatory and other rites and duties enjoined for the twice-born) casting off a relative teaching the Veda for wages, learning the Veda from a paid teacher, and selling goods which one ought not to sell¹¹ superintending mines or factories of any kind executing great mechanical works e.g. making machines for killing great animals and so on, injuring living plants subsisting on the earnings of one's wife, sorcery by means of sacrifices, and working magic by means of roots and so forth,¹² neglecting to kindle the sacred fire, theft non-payment of the three debts (viz., to the

1. (9-240). 2. (9-241). 3. (9-242). 4. (11-91). 5. (11-56). 6. (11-57).
7. (11-58). 8. (11-59). 9. (11-60). 10. (11-62). 11. (11-63). 12. (11-64).

sages, the fathers and the gods), studying bad books, and practising the arts of dancing and singing,¹ stealing grain and cattle, intercourse with women who drink spirituous liquor, slaying women, Sūdras Vaisyas or Kshatriyas, and atheism—all these are *Upapātakas* or offences which cause a loss of caste.² Giving pain to a Brāhman (e.g. by a blow), smelling at things which ought not to be smelt at e.g. garlics, onions etc. or at spirituous liquor, cheating and an unnatural offence with a man, are declared to cause the loss of caste (*Jāti braṁsha*).³

Other minor sins and offences

Killing a donkey, a horse, a camel, a deer, an elephant, a goat, a sheep, a fish, a snake, or a buffalo, these offences degrade the offender to a mixed caste (*Samkarikarana*) and he is purified by reinitiation after undergoing necessary penance.⁴ Accepting presents from blamed men, trading, serving Sūdras and speaking a falsehood make the offender unworthy to receive gifts (*Apāttra*).⁵ Killing insects small or large, or birds, eating anything kept close to spirituous liquor, stealing fruit, firewood, or flowers are offences which make men impure (*Malāvaha*).⁶ Special penances are prescribed in the Dharma Shāstras for an expiation of sins resulting from different offences.⁷

Secret sins and penances for their expiation.

The penances for sins made public are mentioned above, while different penances are prescribed for secret sins. Sixteen suppressions of the breath (*Prāṇāyama*), accompanied by the recitation of the Vyāhritis and of the syllable 'OM' purify a man after a month for the secret sins committed by him including even the murder of a learned Brāhman, provided the said penances are repeated daily.⁸ Even a drinker of wine, the person who has stolen gold and the violator of a Guru's bed in secret, become pure by muttering the prescribed Manttras.⁹ He who desires to expiate sins, great or small, must mutter during a year the Rik verse 'May we remove thy anger, O Varuna etc.', or 'whatever offence here O Varuna etc.'¹⁰ That man who having accepted presents which ought not to

1. (11-66) 2. (11-67) 3. (11-68) 4. (11-69) 5. (11-70) 6. (11-71)
 7. (11-72 to 179) 8. (11-219). 9. (11-250 to 252) 10. (11-253,
 R. V 1-24-14, 7-89-5)

be accepted or having eaten forbidden food, becomes pure after three days by muttering the prescribed verse.¹ But he who has committed many sins becomes pure if he recites during a month the four *Yajur* addressed to Soma and Rudra and also other prescribed *Yajur* while he bathes in a river.² He who is stained by mortal sin becomes pure if with a concentrated mind he attends cows for a year, reciting the *Puramāṇa* verses contained in the 9th *Maṇḍala* of the *Rig Veda* and subsisting on alms.³ Or if pure in mind and in body, he three repeats the *Samhitā* of the *Veda* in a forest, sanctified by three *Parāka* penances: he is freed from all sins causing loss of caste (*Pātaka*).⁴ But if a man fasts during three days, bathing three a day and muttering in the water the hymn of *Ajāmarśana* *Mantra* he is likewise freed from all sins causing loss of caste, as a horse sacrifice removes all sins. A *Brāhmaṇa* who retains in his memory the *Rig Veda* is not stained by guilt though he may have destroyed the three worlds and though he may eat the food of any body.⁵ He who with a concentrated mind three recites the 3 *Vedas* viz., *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and *Sāma-Veda*, together with the texts of the *Upanishads* teaching the secret doctrines is completely freed from all sins.⁶ As a clod of earth falling into a great lake is quickly dissolved, even so every sinful act is engulfed in the threefold *Veda*.⁷

(x) Excommunication of persons having intercourse with outcasts

He who associates with an outcast himself becomes an outcast after an year, by using the same carriage or seat with him or by eating with him but he becomes an outcast forthwith by sacrificing for him, teaching him, or forming a matrimonial alliance with him and he has to perform a penance for expiation. Even a *Sudra* who is not qualified to study the *Veda* and offer oblations to the sacred fire becomes purified by performing the prescribed penance.⁸ The sage *Pārasara* lays down the rule that by the use of the same bed, seat, or cushion with an outcast or by conversation with him or

1 (11-264; R. V. 9-58-1 to 4) 2. (11-255, R. V. 6-74-1 to 4 4 2-4 to 6)
3 (11-258); 4 (11-259) 5 (11-260 261) 6 (11-262) 7 (11-263) 8 (11-264).
9 (M. S. 11-181, G. D. S. 21-3 V. D. S. 1-22 B. D. S. 2-2-35 Y. S. 3-261, V. S. 35-3 to 5)

by eating with him, sin becomes suffused in the body of the person associating with the outcast, just as oil drops poured on water soon spread over its surface¹ He who associates with any one of those outcasts must perform the prescribed penance in order to atone for such intercourse² The Sapindas and Samanodakas i.e. agnate relations of an outcast must offer a libation of water as if he were dead, outside the village, on an inauspicious day, in the evening and in the presence of the relatives, officiating priests and teachers.³ A female slave shall upset with her foot a pot filled with water as if it were for a dead person, his agnate relations shall be impure for a day and a night.⁴ But thenceforward it shall be forbidden to converse with him, to sit with him, to give him a share of the inheritance, and to hold with him such intercourse as is usual among men.⁵

Re-admission of the Excommunicated person to caste after performing penance.

The person who is excommunicated from his caste for associating with outcasts is readmitted to his former caste, after performing the prescribed penance. When he has thus performed the penance, they shall bathe with him in a holy pool and throw down a new pot filled with water. Thenceforth they accuse him no longer and associate with him in all social and religious works⁶ But he shall then throw that pot into water, enter his house and perform as before all the duties incumbent on a relative⁷ Let him follow the same rule in the case of female outcasts, but clothes, food and drink shall be given to them and they shall live close to the family house.⁸ Let him not transact any business with unpurified sinners; but let him in no way reproach those who have made atonement.⁹

(xi) Expiatory penances and rites dictated by the synod of learned Brāhmans (Vidvat Parishad).

A penitent is purified of his sin through the dictates of the synod of learned Brāhmans (*Vidvat Parishad*)¹⁰ Like water that is dried up by the sun and an, the sin of the penitent is extinguished by the order of the Parishad, it does not attach itself either to the penitent or to the synod.¹¹ The Synod that lays down the

1 (P. S. 12-71) 2. (M. S. 11-182) 3 (11-183) 4 (11-184). 5 (11-185).
6 (11-187, G. D. S. 20-10 to 14, V. D. S. 15-17 to 21, Y. S. 3-296).
7. (11-188) 8. (11-189) 9 (11-190). 10. (P. S. 8-17). 11. (8-18)

form of an expiatory rite for a penitent without having any knowledge of the Scriptures, acquires the demerit of the net for which expiation is sought.¹ What three or four Brahmins well-versed in the Vedas lay down as expiation for any particular delinquency, should be regarded as the only true form of expiation that can be advised. What thousands of ignorant Brahmins may advise in the case is not of the right kind.² Sin stands in awe of them, who interpret the meanings of scriptures in conformity with the principles of sound reasoning.³ An assembly consisting of 3 or 4 Brahmins well-versed in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas (i.e. appendages of the Vedas), even without consecrating the sacred fire, is called a *Parishad* (synod).⁴ Even a single Brahmin who is a Muni with a knowledge of self and devoted to prayers, performance of Vedic sacrifices and ceremonial oblations may constitute a *Parishad* in his individual capacity.⁵ In the absence of three Brahmins of the aforesaid type, an assembly consisting of Brahmins who are content with their own profession should be regarded as a *Parishad*.⁶ A council consisting of thousands of persons, who are Brahmins only in name should not be honoured with the dignity of a *Parishad*.⁷ A wooden elephant an antelope made of stuffed hide, and a Brahmin who has not studied the Vedas are the three things that more fully bear the epithet of their living prototypes.⁸ A Brahmin without the Gayatri Mantra is more degraded than a Sudra. Brahmins who know the Supreme Brahman and are devoted to the Gayatri are the foremost in honour and sanctity.⁹

(14) The special purpose of the Dharma Shāstras

(1) Ethics the main purpose of the Dharma Shāstras

The Dharma Shāstras which constitute the Smṛtis of the Hindus are based on the Vedas and they mainly treat of rules of commandment (Vidhi) and prohibition (Nishedha) regulating conduct in relation to the social, moral and religious spheres of a man's life. The main purpose of Dharma Shāstras was ethical. A high moral life (*Sādācāra*) and the observance of rules relating

1 (8-14)	2. (8-15).	3 (8-16)	4 (8-19)	5 (8-20).	6 (8-21).
7 (8-22).	8 (8-23)	9 (8-31).			

to the four orders and stages of life (*Varnāshrama Dharma*) and those relating to ablutions, purity, touch, food, drink, marriage, penance and purification against defilement, marked out and distinguished the Āryans from the Un-Āryans who were known for their unclean and filthy habits, immoral acts, and an impulsive and animalistic life seeking after self-gratification even at the cost of their fellow brethren members of the same society, who were treated by them with cruelty.¹ The Un-Āryans who formed a class by themselves had their dwelling places at the end of the city or village in which the Āryans observing the rules relating to the four castes (*Chāturvarna*) and other matters as prescribed in the *shāstras* resided.² The rules framed by the law-givers in the *Dharma Shāstras* were meant for the racial purity and elevation of morals and the culture and civilisation of the Āryans.

(11) Rules of the Dharma Shāstras were means only to the supreme end of self-realisation and not ends in themselves.

It may be pointed out that the ethical and other rules laid down in the *Dharma Shāstras* were means only to the supreme end of self-realisation or perfect freedom which was the highest end or summum bonum of a man's life and not ends in themselves and their object was purification of a man's body and mind. The supreme end of life as taught in the Vedānta philosophy was knowledge of transcendental idealism which demanded the highest self-sacrifice and a life of high discipline and self-abnegation on the part of the aspirant after supreme truth and enlightenment. In short, ethics was not the goal of human life but it was only a means to the end of spiritual enlightenment and it had therefore to be transcended in the ultimate end. It was however not an easy task for all to have spiritual enlightenment and vision of the supreme divinity all at once without necessary initiation and due qualifications therefor. Hence the law-givers have insisted on the Āryans to observe the rules and regulations as laid down for their guidance in the *Dharma Shāstras* according to their castes, orders of life and so forth which they were enjoined to follow scrupulously by leading an orderly and a graded life, according to their qualifications.

1. (M. S. 10-58). 2. (M. S. 10-51).

The well known scholar and philologist of the West Prof Maxmuller even has defended the rule in the Hindu Scriptures that only those who were initiated to the learning of the sacred lore were qualified to study the esoteric doctrines of the Vedānta philosophy. The learned author makes the following observations in the matter—“The caste of the Sudras was not admitted to the education provided for the higher or the twice-born castes. To admit them to a study of Veda, would have been like admitting naked savages to the lecture room of the Royal Institution x x x But while the Sudras were excluded the right to be taught the Vedānta all the higher castes were admitted to the study of the Upanishads and the Vedānta philosophy, provided always that they had qualified themselves for these higher qualifications. This insistence on certain qualifications is surely not exclusion, and no doctrine can be called esoteric, which is open to all who are able and willing to enter.”

(iii) Whether the ethics of the Bhagavadgītā is opposed to that of the Dharma Shāstras?

An opinion has been expressed on the part of certain social reformers to the effect that the ethics of the Bhagavadgītā is opposed to that of the Dharma Shāstras that the Gītā by its doctrine of equality of all has obliterated all distinctions between the four castes as also all rules of interdiction and restriction laid down in the Dharma Shāstras in matters of touch, food, drink, marriage etc. Even a superficial examination of the contents of the Gītā will dispel the above notion and show that the ethics of the Gītā is not at all opposed to that of the Dharma Shāstras. Our Lord Shri Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna in the Gītā and through him all persons “to treat the scripture law which says Thou shalt not so and so thou shalt not act so and so as the supreme authority in deciding what ought to be done and what ought not to be done”² Further as regards the institution of caste as laid down in the Vedic religion our Lord Shri Kṛṣṇa himself took incarnation on this earth in bodily form for the preservation of spiritual life i.e. Brāhminhood including the Vedas, the Brāhmanas and sacrifices on which depended all distinctions of caste and religious orders (Varṇāshrama). Shri Kṛṣṇa has further pointed out in the Gītā that the four castes

²See three Lectures on the Vedānta philosophy by Maxmuller. 1 (R.G. 10-14).

(Chāturvarṇa) were created by him on the principle of the distribution of qualities and actions,¹ distinct duties having been assigned to the respective castes according to the qualities born of nature from the very birth.² The same principle is laid down in Manu Smṛiti,³ according to which separate duties and occupations were assigned to the four castes, from the very birth. As regards the distinctions as to marriage too, the Gītā scrupulously follows the doctrine of the Dharmā Shāstras and condemns in strong terms the caste-hybrid offspring (*Varṇasankara*) begotten by the inter-marriages of persons belonging to different castes and consigns them to hell.⁴ Manu too in his famous law code,⁵ has laid down the law enjoining on marriage in one's own caste and prohibiting marriages with persons belonging to other castes and he stigmatises the offspring born of Pṛatiloma marriages as the worst sinners. He says "That kingdom in which such bastards sullied the purity of castes are born, perishes quickly together with its inhabitants."⁶ The reader will thus see from the above discussion that the ethics of Bhagvad gītā is in no way opposed to that of the Dharmā Shāstras but accepts the rules in the latter as of supreme authority for the preservation of Āryan culture and purity of race.

(iv) Obedience to Law and Authority paramount duty of all as laid down in the Scriptures and Dharmā Shāstras.

The Āryans looked upon law and order with the greatest veneration from the very earliest times. Thus it is stated in the Ṛig Veda "From devotional austerities of Brahman—the creator, eternal law and truth were born."⁷ In the Upanishads, law and truth were equated with the highest divinity,⁸ which was the object of devotional worship and exacted from all a dutiful obedience to the moral and natural laws. On the whole, we find a growing sense of justice and a higher conception of law displayed in the Upanishads.⁹ "Law is power of the Kshatriya, therefore there is nothing higher than the law. Thenceforth, even a weak man rules a stronger with the help of the law as with the help of a king". The ordinances of Varuṇa as the great Lord of the Laws of nature as also moral

1. (B. G. 4-13). 2. (B. G. 18-41) 3. (M. S. 1-87). 4. (B. G. 1-42).
 5. (M. S. 3-4) 6. (10-61). 7. (R. V. 10-190-1). 8. (N. Pt. U. 1-6)
 9. (B. U. 1-4-14).

laws, govern gods, men and nature and being unchangeable except by His will, they must be dutifully obeyed by all including even gods¹ The sacred law along with the Vedas and the eternal truths revealed therein constitute the word of God (Brahma) who created the universe Brahma imparted knowledge of the sacred law to Manu and Manu imparted it to Marichi, Brighu and other sages² and the sage Brighu taught it to others.³ As regards the majesty of law and its binding character Manu says 'The sacred law of justice and righteousness (Dharma) being violated destroys and being preserved it preserves Therefore sacred law of justice must not be violated, lest justice violated destroy us'⁴ The only friend that follows a man even after death is justice and righteousness, for every thing else is lost at the same time when the body perishes.⁵

(v) Theistic basis of the ethics and sacred laws
laid down in the Dharma Shastras

It may be mentioned here at the outset that in India ethics was never divorced from theology as in the West but it formed a part and parcel of the Aryan religion from the very earliest times, as appears from several hymns of the Rig Veda cited above addressed to Varuna who was not only the Lord of natural laws but also a moral God We have already seen above that according to the Vedic theory, God is the Supreme ruler and governor of the universe who governs nature animate as well as inanimate by moral, just and natural laws which are all controlled by Him in a wise and just manner Neither natural nor moral laws would have their play and operation by themselves without sustenance of the omniscient Lord who also dispenses justice to man and all sentient beings by giving them fruits in exact accordance with the acts done by them whether in this life or in a former life Why a particular act whether good or bad gives rise to corresponding fruits which operate after some time cannot be explained rationally by atheists. Likewise no rational explanation can be given by them even of the working of the law of causation the law of uniformity of nature, and other natural laws without postulating a sentient Being as overlord to control the said laws which being inert and lifeless could not operate in a definite and regular manner of their own accord

1 (R V 4-42-1 2). 2 (M S. 1-58 59) 3 (1-60) 4 (8-15) 5 (8-17).

without divine guidance and control. All the canonical works of the Hindus including the Vedas, the Brāhmanas, the Upanishads, the 2 Epics of Rāmāyana and Māhābhārata, and the Purānas not opposed to the Śruti and Smṛiti are theistic and they presuppose the existence of God as Creator, Ruler and Governor of the universe, without whose wise control the universe could not subsist or carry on its functions in a regular and orderly manner. According to Vedic theory, there is a unity of plan and design seen throughout the whole universe which would soon go to extinction, if it was not controlled by the Omniscient, Omnipotent, and all-pervading God. The Dharmashāstras therefore have throughout presupposed the existence of God as the author and dispenser of the Sacred laws contained therein, all ideas of atheism being entirely repugnant to them.

(vi) Criticism of the modern theory of equality of all.

A new theory has been propounded of late by certain schools of modern thought preaching the doctrine of equality of all men and women and equality of rights without any distinction based on sex, caste, creed, colour, race, blood, rank, wealth, learning, and so forth. It is therefore necessary to examine critically the above theory and consider whether there is any truth therein. Even a superficial examination of the phenomenal world of nature and man and its working would satisfy any one that the truth is just otherwise and he will find that nowhere in the whole universe is it possible to find exact equality between any two objects or even between man and woman. Not only is there no equality but there is great inequality and an infinite variety seen all around in the universe in the form of plains, landscapes, gardens, mountains, valleys, forests, trees, lakes, rivers, seas, oceans, sky, stars, planets, fishes, birds, animals, men, and so on which all differ from one another in numerous ways and manners. Not only do the different objects of nature differ from one another, but even each object singly bristles with an infinite and rich variety therein. Thus taking the single instance of a tree, one will find a great variety therein viz., roots, stem, branches, leaves, flowers, buds, thorns, fruits, seeds and so on which all differ from one another although they are parts of the same tree. So, similarly, men belonging to different races and countries, they differ from one another not only physically and fundamentally in matters relating

to race nationality, linguistics ethnology, culture sociology, economics politics and so on. Similarly the structure or constitution of man differs from that of woman who alone is fitted by nature to be the mother of children and as such she has peculiar rights and duties assigned to her as distinguished from those assigned to man. With these facts before us it would be presumptuous on the part of any one to maintain the theory of equality of all which again is repugnant to the fundamental principles and doctrines of the Hindu scriptures and Dharma śāstras such as those affecting caste and orders of life (*Varṇāśrama*) and rules of conduct for men and women and so on. In fact the Upanishads preach the doctrine of unity in variety. Rich and infinite variety is the very gist of the phenomenal world which would never go on or work smoothly and regularly without a happy and harmonious blending of heterogeneous elements which are however not antagonistic or opposed to one another but are kept united to achieve a central purpose as designed by the Lord. However some reformers who preach the doctrine of absolute equality of all, rely on the following well known and oft quoted verse in the Bhagavad Gītā in support of the above novel doctrine preached by them. The said verse runs as follows 'In a Brāhmaṇa endued with wisdom and humility in a cow, in an elephant, as also in a dog and a dog-eater (i.e. a chandāla or an outcast) the wise see equality (*Sama*)'¹ The great philosopher and Scholar Śrī Shankaracharya commenting on the above verse makes the following observations. "Of the creatures mentioned above, the highest is the Brāhmaṇ who is spiritually regenerated and highly Sāttvic (i.e. in whom the quality of *Sattva* or purity predominates). Next comes the cow not spiritually regenerated and which is Rājasic (i.e. in which the quality of *Rajas* or energy predominates). Lastly come the elephant etc. (i.e. dog, and chandāla) which are purely Tāmasic (in which the quality of *Tamas* i.e. darkness or ignorance predominates). In all the beings mentioned above the sages see the same, the one who is immutable in Himself and quite untouched by *Sattva* and other qualities (i.e. strands born of nature (*Prakṛti*)) or by the tendencies born of these, whether Sāttvic, Rājasic or Tāmasic." The reader will see from the

above that the verse of the Gītā quoted above does not teach the lesson of equality of all as wrongly interpreted by the reformers but the word *Sama* or equality in the verse is used in the technical sense of the Supreme Divinity and not in the sense of physical equality of the different objects. This construction is further supported by an explanation of the word *Sama* or equality in the next verse as meaning Brahman or the highest God. The said verse runs as follows "Even here birth (by transmigration) is overcome by those persons whose mind rests on equality (*Sāmya*); spotless indeed and equal (*Samam*) is Brahman, wherefore in Brahman they rest."¹ A very humorous criticism of the above novel interpretation of the word *Samam* in the above verse is made by the late great scholar of Maharashtra Lokamānya Bāl Gangādhār Tilak, in his well known commentary on the Gītā. The learned writer remarks in this connection that if the well versed Brāhman, cow, elephant, dog and eater of dog's flesh were all equal, then a human being like an animal would partake of grass offered to him as his meal but as a matter of fact no human being does so, it being opposed to the very nature of things. It would therefore be absurd to argue that all beings are equal or that they have equal rights, irrespective of all considerations of sex, caste, creed, community, race, rank, social status, learning, wealth, and so on. Thus the rights and duties of males are fundamentally different from those of women. Similarly even the rights and duties of men and women separately for themselves differ in several respects. Though all men are made of the same stuff physically, and though they have certain rights and duties in common as human beings and members of the same society, yet they are not exactly alike in all respects. In short, they cannot be treated of the same quality as mere clay, as by doing so man would be reduced to the low level of material objects and animals and it would efface all human valuation and the value of the high ideals entertained by different individuals, societies and institutions which vary according to the level of culture and civilisation reached by them. The theory of equality of all is not only false and unfounded in fact but is also dangerous and mischievous in its consequences as leading to rebellion against all established authority whether secular, religious, legal,

social or of other kind and it will introduce into society principles of communism. It is even an undesirable condition which would be most disastrous to the stability, peace and happiness of society as also to a peaceful and good Government.

(vii) Restraining influence of the Dharma Shāstras in combating the present day disruptive forces leading to communism and Bolshevism

The fallacies underlying the modern theory of communism

We shall now examine the fallacy underlying the modern theory of communism which is spreading far and wide almost all over the world and also in our country and then the Dharma Shāstras by their social and religious laws have endeavored against the dangers of communism justifying into society. The exponents and adherents of the theory of communism are to be found in countries have forms of Communism like the theories of socialism, communism and others. They profess to follow the doctrine of equality of all men and women and equality of rights for all without any distinction as to caste, creed, colour, race, religion, blood, wealth, strength and so on but which is contradicted in practice as pointed out above. The communist movement is an anti-God campaign which is being propagated to-day in Soviet Russia and which has expatriated the minds of several eminent persons who claim to lead the country by its apparent adherence to justice and the principle of equality of all but which is entirely misconceived and even perverted in practice. Religion and communism are incompatible both in theory and practice. The famous Bolshevik leader Lenin said "We will grapple with God. We will conquer him in the highest heaven and wherever He seeks refuge we will subdue Him for ever." Active legislation is used to make religion disappear. It is said "Communism aims by every means even the most ruthless at two objects: relentless class war and the total abolition of private property."

Some phases of communism

Marriage is treated as a mockery and there are no restrictions of any kind relating to marriage e.g. restraining one from marrying a wife within one's own family. The marriage tie is very loose neither

having the Sacramental sanctity of religion nor even the ordinary tie of family life. The parties can obtain dissolution of marriage even the very next moment after marriage. In short, while the Hindu Shāstias seek to preserve the purity of blood and race by wise laws of marriage, the Communists seek to destroy the purity of race by promoting indiscrete and reckless marriages without any restriction whatever. Nor is there anything like a normal family life in societies based on the principle of communism. "The most serious consequence of the industrial movement is the passing away of the homes. We see it in America and in Russia, where every member aspires for economic independence, family ties are weakened, men and women work outside their home, and the children when they are not asleep at home, work in school or college and amuse themselves in the football or the cinema hall."¹ With regard to Russia, Trotsky in his problems of life writes "Gigantic events have descended on the family in its old shape...we need more socialistic economic reforms. Only under such conditions can we free the family from the functions and cares that now oppress and disintegrate it. Washing must be done by a public laundry, catering by a public restaurant, sewing by a public workshop, children must be educated by good public teachers who have a real vocation for the work. Then the bond between husband and wife would be freed from every thing external and accidental and the one would cease to absorb the life of the other." "In short neither a woman's place nor a man's is the home," as observed by Sir Radhākṛishna. "In the communistic philosophy no account is taken of even the possibility of a spiritual survival after the death of the body nor of spiritual or religious freedom. Every thing is to be centered on temporal beliefs and animal gratification...and men must live as animals." The above picture will give the reader some idea of the principles of communism and to what length of absurdity they have gone.

The Principles of communism opposed to Democracy and liberty and their disastrous consequences

Democracy which is the rule of a country by its own people does not exist as such in Soviet Russia which has a communistic

1. See Kalki by Sir Radhakrishna.

form of Government nominally of the Proletariat but really of the Dictators whose rule is supreme and anti-democratic and it leaves no scope to individual freedom in any sphere of life. There is no liberty of action and thought or freedom of conscience whether in religious or other matters except as dictated by the State through its Dictator. The teachings of communism have resulted in letting loose in society forces of a disruptive nature in the form of constant frictions between capital and labour, landlord and tenant, clergy and laity, teacher and pupil, father and son, husband and wife and lastly between the ruler and the ruled. Private property is denounced, religion is given the go-by, traditions are broken, clergymen are banished, Churches are converted into hospitals and schools and all forms of Government whether monarchical, oligarchical, constitutional or otherwise are condemned except that of dictatorship of a few leaders of the communist party. The communist dictators seek to enforce their views on the people by encroaching on the liberty of the latter in all spheres of life whether social, economic, educational, political or religious. Waves of communism have of late spread into India and its principles are being propagated widely in the pious name of liberty, fraternity and equality. Liberty is taken by some to mean unbridled license so as to give them a passport to do anything they like. The leaders understand liberty in one sense while the masses in another. This confused state of thought is responsible for bringing into existence various forms of dictatorship which seek to enforce the will of a few dictators on many people in general even against their will by investing the dictators with extraordinary and unlimited powers.

Restraining influence of the Dharma Shāstras.

The principles of Communism are not yet understood by the people and unless checked in time they are likely to degenerate into waves of Bolshevism and even lawlessness. The principles of communism are repugnant to the teachings of the Dharma Shāstras and the ethical Theism inculcated therein and they are not acceptable to the revered authors and sages of the religious law-codes of the Hindus like Manu, Yāgyavalkya, and others. The Dharma Shāstras have proclaimed in loud terms that the good and welfare of society consists not in equality of rights but in observance of

duties (*Dharma*) laid down for its various groups and members. The authors of the Dharmashāstras have denounced the spirit of unhealthy competition between the different groups and members of society based on a false interpretation of the doctrine of equality of all. The so-called principle of equality of all as commonly understood is opposed to nature and is contradicted by all experience as no two human beings are exactly alike in all respects nor could the same rights and duties be exercised or enjoyed together by all in all matters. Rights and duties are correlative and they always vary with different individuals and their conduct towards one another also depends on their mutual relations and it cannot possibly be the same. Thus although a mother, a sister, a daughter and a wife are all women, yet they cannot be treated all alike by any man whose behaviour with them varies according to the relations they bear to him nor can the same rights be exercised by them or with them. Unity in variety and not mere monotonous uniformity is the cardinal doctrine of the Hindu Shāstras which is based on the Upanishadic doctrine of non-dual monism. The duties of women are different from those of men. The duties of the four castes (Chāturvarṇa), the Brāhmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Sūdras are different and the duties prescribed for the four orders of life (*Āshrama Dharma*) viz, those of student, house-holder, anchorite, and ascetic are also different. By interchange of duties as laid down in the Dharma Shāstras and chalking out new modes of life contrary thereto according to one's own whims and impulses which are animalistic, there would result caste confusion (*Varan Sankaratā*) and misery to the whole society. People want to assert rights and claim equality with others without possessing the necessary qualifications therefor but they shirk duties and responsibilities imposed upon them. The authors of the various law-codes have therefore prescribed beneficent rules and regulations, to counteract the evil influences resulting from the above perverted and false notions for the good and peace of society as a whole, by laying down high ideals for the improvement of the conduct, morals, purity and general level of its component groups and members as also for regulating their inter relations. If the different groups and members of society fulfilled their duties in conformity with the

sacred law laid down in the Dharma Shāstras for their conduct, they would soon discover that they are already enjoying the rights of freedom aspired for by them and all strifes and discords that are found prevailing at present in society would disappear for ever and complete peace, unity, and happiness would be restored everywhere. According to the Vedic theory of caste (Varna) which is a divine institution and is accepted as such in the Dharmashāstras, the several castes and sub-castes are not detached from or independent of, one another as rival bodies competing for supremacy but they constitute one whole community or brotherhood under the kingdom of one God of which they are component parts and units and they have to perform only the respective duties and functions assigned to them. By scrupulously following the rules laid down for them, they would ultimately realise that true happiness consists in union and harmony with other fellow members of the same society who are all inter-related as members of a living organism pulsating with the same effulgent ray of divine life which ever keeps them together to achieve supreme bliss, supreme happiness and supreme freedom as the summum bonum of life gradually and by slow degrees without any disintegration or rupture of the society at any time. In short responsive co-operation and co-ordination and not competition is the basic principle of the structure of Hindu society as laid down in the Dharma Shāstras in conformity with the Vedāntic doctrine of monism. The Hindu ideal of life consists in spiritual evolution and uplift of the society as a whole through gradual elevation and improvement of its component parts by regulating their conduct individually as well as in relation to other members of society. The Hindu Dharma Shāstras have therefore taught the supreme lesson that an individual must curb all selfish and egoistic tendencies of securing individual good at the cost of others by leading a well-disciplined, religious, and moral life so as to do positive good to his fellow brethren as members of a living organism. The above ideal of Hindu life may be contrasted with the modern ideal of the west which seeks more to achieve good of the individual rather than good of the society as a whole with the result that we constantly find clashes of interests between individuals and society, and between individuals and groups of individuals among themselves which it was the sole aim of the Dharma Shāstras to eradicate from society by enacting wise laws and regulations for its evolution.

CONCLUSION.

It may be stated here at the end, that Indian Philosophy in general as distinguished from Dars'ans proper as ordinarily understood is comprehensive enough in its nature and scope so as to include therein subjects affecting the daily life of every person in almost all the spheres of human activity, spiritual, religious, intellectual, social, legal, moral and so on, as will appear from the above pages. As observed by Sir Rādhākṛishna "It is the intimate relation between the truth of philosophy and the daily life of people that makes religion always alive and real." Hence I have in this book dealt with rather at great length, the rules of conduct and discipline as affecting the daily life of people and laid down by the Hindu law-givers for the guidance of individuals as well as society as preliminary means to acquiring the necessary qualifications for understanding the abstruse and difficult problems of Indian philosophy. The great saint and teacher Pushpadanta has rightly observed in his memorable work '*Mahiman Stotra*' which is daily sung as a devotional song by the religiously minded Hindus from one end of the country to the other that "Though there is a great diversity in the tastes of people in selecting the paths for approach to the highest divinity, whether straight, circuitous, or of other kind, yet O Lord, thou art one only, the supreme destination of all, like an ocean to the rivers." Similarly, although the end of Indian philosophy which is the summum bonum of human life is one only viz, self-realisation as determined most accurately by the Indian philosophers and sages and certified by their individual experiences separately, yet the means prescribed by them for achieving the said end were different to suit the varying capacities of people as pointed out by the great religious thinkers, saints, and savants of India from time to time in their several monumental works. In fact, the cardinal principle of Indian philosophy is Unity in variety which is followed by all subsequent religious writers. I have therefore made an humble attempt in these pages to elucidate the leading principles of Indian philosophy which includes religion as well as ethics, from various standpoints to suit the varying capacities of different individuals and enable them to appreciate the valuable services done to the cause of Philosophy and religion by the great thinkers of India, who were once the torch bearers of light and learning. If these pages succeed in creating in the minds of the reader a taste for higher study in the realms of Indian Philosophy and religion and is found useful to him, I shall consider that my attempt has not been in vain.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SELECTIONS FROM THE TEXTS

CONTENTS

(1)	Prayer to Varuna.	..	...	...	...	...407
(2)	Unanimity in Assembly	...	...	...	...	...408
(3)	Prayer for blessings to the kingdom	...	...	...	...	...408
(4)	Glorification of the Prime Cause...	...	...	...	...	...408
(5)	Know thy-self	...	...	...	...	...409
(6)	The everlasting nay	...	...	...	...	...410
(7)	Gārgī and Yājñavalkya — the omnipotence of the attributeless Impershable (Akshara )	...	...	...	...	...411
(8)	Maitreyī and Yājñavalkya—love of the all-embracing (pantheistic) self (Ātman)	.	...	...	...	...412
(9)	Bliss of the Infinite (Bhūman) and Perfect Freedom	...	...	...	...	...414
(10)	<i>Gloria in Excelsis</i>	...	...	...	...	...415
(11)	Devotion to Krishna-Vāsudeva	...	...	...	...	. 417
(12)	Bhagwad-Gītā on sacrifice	...	...	...	...	...417
(13)	Divine and devilish natures	...	...	...	...	...418
(14)	Nahūsha and Yudhisṭhira—Definition of a true Brāhmaṇa	...	...	...	...	420
(15)	Self is its own witness	...	...	...	...	...420
(16)	Dharma—the only inseparable friend	...	...	...	...	...421

APPENDIX A

(1) Prayer to Varuna

Unchangeable in their greatness are the origins of that Varuna who bare up the vast heaven and earth, who appointed unto their two-fold task the glorious sun and the beautiful constellations who spread out the earth

When may I in my person converse with that deity? When may I enter into the heart of Varuna? How shall He without displeasure accept my oblation? When may I joyful of heart, behold that giver of happiness?

In my desire to behold Thee Varuna, I ask what is mine offence I have gone to make inquiry of the wise verily the sages have said the same to me — Varuna is wroth with thee

What hath that great wickedness been, Varuna that thou shouldst seek to destroy the worshipper, Thy friend? Supreme, resplendent Varuna declare it unto me that freed from sin, I may quickly approach thee in veneration

Loosen the bonds imposed by the ill deeds of our fore-fathers and those laid upon us by the sins which we have ourselves committed liberate (me) Vasishtha, O King! Varuna like a calf from its tether

It is not our own choice Varuna but destiny from such come drunkenness wrath, gambling ignorance the strong standeth beside the weak even a dream may provoke to sin

Freed from sin I may perform like a slave diligent service to the divine Benefactor the sustainer of the world may He the divine Lord, give wisdom to us who are void of understanding may He who is most wise guide the worshipper to wealth. May this laudation, O Varuna the provider of food be taken into Thy heart may success be ours in keeping what we have and in gaining more and do ye, the Gods ever cherish and bless us.

(2) Unanimity in Assembly

Thou mighty Agni, gatherest up all that is precious for thy friend. Bring us all treasures as thou art enkindled in libation's place.

Assemble, speak together, let your mind be of one accord, as ancient Gods unanimous sit down to their appointed share.

The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thought united. A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with your general oblation.

One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord. United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree.

(*Rig Veda* 10-191)

(3) Prayer for blessings to the kingdom.

Oh, Brahman, let there be born in the kingdom the Brāhman illustrious for religious knowledge, let there be born the Rājanya, heroic, skilled archer, piercing with shafts, mighty warrior, the cow giving abundant milk, the ox good at carrying, the swift courser, the industrious woman May Pajanya send rain according to our desire, may our fruit-bearing plants ripen; may acquisition and preservation of property be secured to us.

(*White Yajurveda* 22-22)

(4) Glorification of the Prime Cause.

Vena (i. e. the loving, rising sun) beholds that Highest (the Supreme First Cause) which lies hidden, wherein this all resumes one form and fashion Thence Prishni (the speckled cow as creative power of nature) milked all life that had existence, the hosts (created beings) that know the light with songs extolled her.

Knowing eternity, may the Gandharva (i. e. Vena, the rising sun) declare to us that highest secret station Three steps thereof lie hidden in the darkness he who knows these shall be the father's father (i. e. wiser than his elders).

He (the Almighty Creator) is our Knisman, father and begetter. He knows all beings and all ordinances. He only gave the Gods their appellations. All creatures go to Him to ask direction.

I have gone forth round the earth and heaven. I have approached the first born son (Prajapati the creator developing as Agni) of order (i.e. the eternal law of the universe).

He putting Voice as it were within the speaker stands in the world. He verily is Agni (fire).

I round the circumbaccant worlds have travelled to see this far-extended thread of order, wherein the Gods obtaining life eternal, have risen upward to one common birthplace.

(Atharvaveda 2-1)

(5) Know thy self

The world then was not unfolded. It became unfolded in Name and Shape, so that one might say, "He of this or that name is of this or that shape." So even now it becomes unfolded in Name and Shape so that one may say, "He of this or that name is of this or that shape." He passed into it up to the nail-tips as a razor might be laid in a razor-case or the All-Supporter (i.e. fire-god) in the All-Supporter's nest. They see Him not for He is divided. As breathing, He is called Breath; as speaking, Speech; as seeing, Sight; as hearing, Hearing; as thinking, Mind; these are the names for his workings. A man who worships one or another thereof understands not, for He is but in division as one or another thereof. So He should be worshipped as the Self, for therein do all these become one.

This Self is the track of the Universe for by it is the universe known, yea, as a thing may be followed up by its track. Fama and praise a man finds who has such knowledge.

This Self is dearer than a son, dearer than substance, dearer than all beside more inward. If of a man who calls another than the Self dear it should be said that he will lose his darling it may well come to pass. He should worship the Self only as darling for him who worships the Self as darling his darling perishes not,

They say. "Seeing that men deem that by knowledge of Brahma they shall become the universe, what did Brahma know that He became the universe?"

The world forsooth was in the beginning Brahma. It knew itself, "I am Brahma", therefore it became the universe. And whosoever of the gods understood this also became the same, likewise of sages and of men. Seeing this, the sage Vāmadeva set it forth, saying "I have become Manu and Sun". So now likewise he who knows "I am Brahma" becomes the universe. The very Gods have no power that he should not be so, for he becomes the Self of them.

Now he who worships another godhead, saying "This is not the same as I," understands not, he is as it were a beast belonging to the Gods. Even as many beasts profit a man, so each man profits the Gods. It is unpleasing when one beast is taken away, how much more when many are taken! Therefore it is not pleasing to them (i. e. to gods) that men should know this

(*Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 1-4-7 to 10*)

(6) The everlasting nay.

Verily this great unborn Self it is that is compact of understanding amid the life-breaths, that lies in the ether within the heart, master of all, lord of all, ruler of all, He becomes not greater by a good deed nor less by an ill deed, He is king of all, ruler of born beings, guardian of born beings, the dyke holding asunder these worlds that they fall not one into another. Brāhmans seek to know Him by reading the Veda, by sacrifice, by charity, by mortification. Knowing Him, a man becomes a saint, wandering friars wander forth seeking Him for their world. Understanding this, the ancients desired not offspring. "What is offspring to us who have this Self for this world?" So having departed from desire of sons, from desire of substance and desire of the world, they went about begging. For desire of sons is desire of substance, desire of substance is desire of the world, these are both desires.

This Self is Nay, Nay not to be grasped, for He is not grasped; not to be broken, for He is not broken, unclinging, for He clings not, He is not bound, He trembles not, He takes no hurt.

One (who knows this) is overcome neither by having done evil for His sake nor by having done good for His sake, he overcomes both, work done and work not done grieve him not.

This is end by a verse

The Brahman's constant majesty by works,
Nor waxes more, nor wanes. This shall he trace
This known, ill deeds defile him no more

(*Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad 4-4-22, 23*)

(7) Gārgi and Yājñavalkya—the omnipotence of the attributeless Imperishable (Akshara)

' Yājñavalkya ' said Gārgi " as a warrior from the land of Kāśī or Videha might sting his unstrung bow and come forward holding in his hand two arrows to pierce through his foe, even so I have come forward against thee with two questions answer me them "

" Ask, Gārgi "

" Yājñavalkya, ' said she ' that which is above the heavens, which is beneath the earth, which is midway between the heavens and the earth, which they call the past and the present and the future in what is it woven and woofed ? "

" Gārgi, " said he, " that which is above the heavens, which is below the earth, which is midway between the heavens and the earth, which they call the past and the present and the future is woven and woofed in the earth "

" Homsge to thee, Yājñavalkya, " said she " for thou hast answered me this make ready for the other "

' Ask, Gārgi '

" Yājñavalkya, ' said she, " that which is above the heavens, which is below the earth, which is midway between the heavens and the earth, which they call the past and the present and the future in what is it woven and woofed ? "

' Gārgi " said he " that which is above the heavens, which is below the earth which they call the past and the present and the future is woven and woofed in the ether "

" And in what is the ether woven and woofed ? "

'No' said Yājñavalkya 'As the life of the rich, even so would your life be Of immortality, however there is no hope through wealth'

Then said Maitreya 'What should I do with that through which I may not be immortal? What you know, sir—that, indeed, tell me!'

Then said Yājñavalkya 'Ah' Lo dear as you are to us, dear is what you say! Come, sit down I will explain to you But while I am expounding, do you seek to ponder thereon'

Then said he Lo verily, not for love of the husband is a husband dear, but for the love of Soul (Ātman) a husband is dear

Lo verily, not for love of the wife is a wife dear but for the love of Soul a wife is dear

Lo, verily, not for love of the wealth is wealth dear, but for the love of Soul wealth is dear

Lo verily not for love of Brahmanhood (Brahma) is Brāhmaṇhood dear, but for love of the Soul Brahminhood is dear x x x

Lo, verily, not for love of all is all dear, but for the love of Soul all is dear

Lo, verily it is the Soul (Ātman) that should be seen, that should be hearkened to, that should be thought on that should be pondered on O Maitreya, Lo, verily, with the seeing of with the hearkening to with the thinking of, and with the understanding of the Soul, this world—all is known

Brāhmaṇhood has deserted him who knows Brahmanhood in aught else than the Soul x x x

This Brāhmaṇhood, this Kṣatrihood, these worlds, these gods, these beings, everything here is what this Soul is. x x x

It is—as, when a lute is being played, one would not be able to grasp the external sounds, but by grasping the lute or the player of the lute the sound is grasped

It is—as, from a fire laid with damp fuel clouds of smoke separately issue forth, so lo, verily, from this great Being (Bhūta) has been breathed forth that which is Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma

Veda, Hymns of the Ātharvans and Anguśas (*ie Atharvaveda*), Legend (*Itihāsa*), Ancient Lore (*Purana*), Science (*Vidyā*), Mystic Doctrines (*Upanishad*), Verses (*Sloka*), Aphorisms (*Sūtra*), Explanations, Commentaries. From it, indeed, are all these breathed forth.***

It is—as a lump of salt cast in water would dissolve right into the water; there would not be (any) of it to seize forth, as it were (*Iva*), but wherever one may take, it is salty indeed...so, lo, verily, this great Being (*Bhūta*), infinite, limitless, is just a mass of knowledge (*Vijnāna-ghana*).

Arising out of these elements, into them also one vanishes away. After death there is no consciousness Thus, lo, say I” Thus spake Yājñavalkya.

Then spake Maitreyī “Herein, indeed, you have bewildered me, su—in saying “After death there is no consciousness !”

Then spake Yājñavalkya “Lo, verily, I speak not bewilderment. Sufficient, lo, verily, is this for understanding.

For where there is a duality (*Dvanta*), as it were (*Iva*), there one sees another, there one smells another, there one hears another there one speaks to another, there one thinks of another, there one understands another. Where, verily, everything has become just one’s own self, then whereby and whom would one smell? then whereby and whom would one see? then whereby and whom would one hear? then whereby and to whom would one speak? then whereby and on whom would one think? Then whereby and whom would one understand? Whereby would one understand him by whom one understands this All? Lo, whereby would one understand the understander?”

(*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2-4*)

(9) Bliss of the Infinite (*Bhūman*).

The Infinite is bliss. There is no bliss in anything finite. Infinite only is bliss. This Infinite, however, we must desire to understand

Where one seeth nothing else, heareth nothing else, understandeth nothing else, that is the Infinite. Where one seeth

(heareth understandeth) something else that is the Finite The Infinite is immortal, the Finite is mortal

And in what doth the Infinite rest? In its own greatness nay, not even in its greatness The Infinite indeed is below, above behind before, to right, and to left—it is indeed all This followeth the explanation of the Infinite as the I I am below, I am above, I am behind, before, to right and to left—I am all this

Followeth the explanation of the Infinite as the Self (or Soul). Self is below, above, behind, before to right and to left—Self is all This.

He who seeth, perceiveth and understandeth this loveth the Self, rejoiceth in the Self—he becometh the Ruler of Self he is Lord and Master in all the worlds

But those who think differently from this live in perishable worlds and have other beings for their rulers

(Chhandogya Upamshad 7-28)

(10) Gloria in Excelsis

I know that great Spirit sun-hued, beyond the darkness Knowing Him, man escapeth Death there is no other way to walk.

Thun this naught else is higher, nor subtler, nor mightier As a tree firm-set in the heavens stands the One with this Spirit the universe is filled

Formless, sorrowless is the Highest, they become deathless who know it, but others come to very grief

With face, head neck everywhere dwelling in covert in every creature, pervading all, the Lord is He thus everywhere is the presence of the Gracious.

A great Lord is the Spirit mover of the understanding, ruler of this pure approach, Light unfading

The Spirit dwells ever as inward soul, an inch in stature, within men's hearts conceived by the heart the imagination, the thought deathless they become who know this

Showing himself in the qualities of all senses void of all senses He is Lord, ruler of all refuge of all

Bodied in the nine-gated city, the Swan hovers without, master of all the motionless and moving world.

Handleless and footless, He speeds and seizes; eyeless, He sees, earless, He hears. He knows what may be known, but there is none to know Him. Men call Him the Pūmal, the Great Spirit.

Subtler than the subtle is He, greater than the great, the Soul lodged in covert in living beings. Freed from grief, man sees by the Almighty's grace Him the desireless. Him the power sovereign.

I know Him, the ageless, ancient, All-Soul, dwelling everywhere in universal presence, to whom Brahman-teachers deny birth whom they call the Eternal.

The one hue that by blending of powers lends manifold hues in diverse wise from gathered substance, the Beginning and End wherein the All dissolves—He is God; may He unite us with blessed understanding!

That same is the Fire, that is the Sun, that the Wind, that the Moon; that same is the Bright, that Brahman, that the Waters, that the Creator.

Thou art woman, Thou art man, Thou art boy and maiden; Thou art the old man tottering on the staff, Thou art born with face looking all ways.

Thou art the black bird, the green with red eyes, the lightning-bearing (cloud), the seasons, the seas, Thou art that which is beginningless. Thou livest in universal presence, whence are born all beings... ..

In vision of the Lord, the bounteous worshipful God, who stands sole wanderer over every womb, in whom this All falls together and dissolves asunder, man comes to this everlasting peace.

May He who is the fount and origin of the Gods, the lord of all, Rudra, the great sage who beheld the Germ of Gold (Hiranyagarbha) coming into being, unite us with blessed understanding... ..

Where there is not darkness, nor day and night, nor being or not-being, but the Gracious One alone, that is the Untiding, that is the lovely (night) of Savitā (the sun), thence has streamed forth the ancient Intelligence.

He may not be grasped above nor athwart, nor in the midst
There is no likeness of Him whose name is Great Glory

His form is not to be beheld none sees Him with the eye
Deathless they become who in heart and mind know Him as
heart-dwelling. x x x

Seeking for freedom, I go for refuge to that God who is the
light of his own thought He who created the creator and delivered
the Vedas unto Him

(*Savitārāra Upanishad* 5-8 1, 1-20, and 6-18)

(11) Devotion to Krishna-Vāsudeva

Whoever with devotion offereth Me leaf, flower, fruit or
water, that, given with devotion I accept from him whose self is pure
and enjoy Whatever thou dost, whatever thou entest, whatever
sacrifice thou makest, whatever thou givest, whatever penance thou
performest do that as offered to Me Thus wilt thou be set free
from the bonds of action the fruits of which are tasteful or distasteful
And, thyself long filled with this devotion, and controlled by
renunciation, thou wilt be set free and come unto Me I am alike
unto all beings to Me none is hateful, none is beloved but those
who worship Me with devotion abide in Me, and I also in them

(*Bhagavad Gītā* 9-26 to 29)

(12) Bhagwad-Gītā on Sacrifice.

The net of offering is Brahmann the offered gift is Brahman,
offered by Brahman in fire that is Brahman To Brahman must
he come who contemplates (*Samādhi*) a work that is Brahman

To the Lords of Heaven do some Ascetics observe the sacrifice
and others by sacrifice only offer sacrifice in the fire that is Brahman

Some offer the senses hearing and the rest in the fires of
restraint others offer the objects of sense sound and the rest, in
the fires of the senses

Others offer all the works of sense and works of breath in
the knowledge-kindled fire of control, which is restraint of self

Others make sacrifice with substance (e.g. costly articles, practising liberality in general and so on), sacrifice with austerity, (i.e. mortification of the body *tapas*), sacrifice likewise with ascetic practice (*Yoga*-methods of control), or with scripture-reading and learning, men of restraint, men of strict vows (*Vratāḥ*)

Others offer the outward breath in the inward, and the inward in the outward; checking the flow of both inward and outward, they make constraint of breath (*Prāṇāyāma*) their aim.

Others, moderate in food, offer breaths in breaths (*Prāṇāyāma*) Each one of these is a knower of sacrifice (i.e. one who performs sacrifice with the knowledge (spiritual) which alone gives it its value), and by sacrifice, then stain is done away.

Eating the remains of the sacrifice, ambrosial food, they go to Brahman, which is from everlasting, this world is not for him who sacrifices not; how then another, best of Kurus?

Thus manifold are the sacrifices outspread at the gate of Brahman, know that all these are born of work, if thou dost know this, thou shalt find release.

The sacrifice of knowledge O Paramtapa, is better than material sacrifice, every work without exception, son of Prithā, comes to complete fulfilment in knowledge.

Learn this by reverence, by questioning, by service. Men of knowledge, who behold the truth, will teach thee knowledge.

(*Bhagwad Gītā* 4-24 to 34)

(13) Divine and devilish natures. (Daivāsura Sampat).

The Blessed Lord said.

Fearlessness (*Abhayaṃ*), purity of heart (*Satva Samsuddhiḥ*), steadfastness in devotion to knowledge, liberality (*Dānam*), Self-restraint (*Dama*), sacrifice, sacred study (*Svādhāya*), austerity (*Tapas*), uprightness (*Arjavam*).

Harmlessness (*Ahimsā*), truth (*Satyam*), an even temper (*Akrodhah*), abandonment, quietude (*Shāntiḥ*), an unmalicious tongue, tenderness towards beings (*Dayā*), a soul unruffled by desire, gentleness, modesty, constancy.

Ardour, long suffering (*Aśānta*) fortitude (*Dhīra*) cleanness (*S'atvata*) freedom from hatred and arrogance—these are his who is born to Divine nature. O Bhārata.

Hypocrisy, pride, malice, envy, wrath, idleness, and ignorance (*Bhīṭa*)—these are his, O son of Prithā, who is born to Devilish nature.

The Divine nature is destined to lead to emancipation, the Devilish to perdition. Grieve not, O son of Pāṇḍu, thou art born to the Divine nature.

Two creations of beings exist in the world—the divine and the devilish—the former has been described at length. Hear (the account of) the other from me. The devilish men are equally ignorant of necessity (*Pravṛtta*) and liberation from action (*Nivṛtta*) they are deluded by false knowledge (*Saṁśaya*) nor is right conduct (*Dharma*) for them (*Saṁśaya*).

"Without truth (to be put in contrast to the truth of the Veda, Shāstra, etc.—of the Vedas or materialists), without law (to be contrasted with the moral government of the Universe) they say, and without God, lack of mutual union and lust (*Kāma*)—this is the view of Lokayatis or materialists, that sexual passion is the sole cause of all living creatures) naught elude. Yielding to insatiable desire, full of hypocrisy, arrogance, and conceit, impure in their practices, and governed by delusion (*Mohā*) they snatch at wrongful gains.

Interminable boundless anticipations extending to the end of all things, esteeming enjoyment (*Kāmaprīkṣya*) the main thing and the only thing, bound in a hundred chains of hope, the slaves of lust and anger, for the sake of gratifying their passions, they strive to amass wealth by unjust means. 'This has been gained by me to-day; the object of desire I shall obtain. I have this property, and that further wealth I shall acquire. That enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay the others also. I am lord, I enjoy pleasure, I am complete, powerful, happy, I am opulent, of noble birth—who else is like me? I will sacrifice and bestow alms, I will make merry. Thus speaking, deluded by ignorance, carried away by many imaginations, enveloped in the net of illusion (*Mohayāla*) and abandoned to gratifications, they fall into an impure hell (*Naraka*)."

(*Bhagavad Gītā* 16-1 to 16)

(14) Nahusha and Yudhisthira—Definition of true Brāhman.

“Answer my question correctly” said Nahusha, the serpent “or else I will finish off thy brothers” “Ask Oh great serpent,” said Yudhisthira, “I will answer to the best of my abilities.” “Who is a Brāhman?” asked Nahusha. Yudhisthira replied “One who is endowed with truthfulness, liberality, forgiveness, good conduct, equality of feeling towards all, austere life, and compassion.” “But the four castes do exist.” rejoined Nahusha “what then if truthfulness, liberality, forgiveness &c. are found in a S’udra?” Yudhisthira answered “If this mark exists in S’udra and does not exist in a Brāhmana, that S’udra is not a S’udra and that Brāhmana is not a Brāhmana, O great serpent: Where this mark exists, the person is a Brāhmana, where it does not, the person is a S’udra.” If O, King “said Nahusha” You think that a man’s demeanour makes him a Brāhmana, then the fact of belonging to a particular caste is of no avail unless a man’s actions entitle him to that caste.” “The caste, Oh great serpent,” said Yudhisthira, “in the presence of the general species of mankind is at present indistinguishable in consequence of the great intermixture of races. Men of all castes beget children on women belonging to all castes indiscriminately. Men are common only in speech, sexual intercourse, birth and death. I will quote a further Vedic argument viz., the verse ‘Ye yajamāhe.’ Therefore, those who have an insight into the essence of things believe that conduct is the chief thing. Castes are useless if suitable conduct does not exist, for the intermixture of races has been very great indeed.”

(*Mahābhārata Vana-Parva, 182-21 et. seq.*)

(15) Self is its own witness.

The self (or soul) is its own witness; and the self is its own refuge. Disregard not thy soul which is the best witness of men.

Śrîneis think ‘no one sees us’ but the gods behold them and their own inner man.

Though good man, thou thinkest of thyself ‘I am alone!’ know that this sage (muni) residing in thy heart is a beholder of virtuous and sinful acts

' If thou art not at variance with that divine Yama the son of Visasvat, who dwells in thy heart, thou needest neither visit the Ganges nor the land of the Kurus (Kurukshetra)'

(*Manu Smriti* 8-84, 85, 91, 92)

(16) Dharma the only inseparable friend

The only firm friend who follows men even after death is virtue all others are extinct with the body. For in his passage to the next world neither his father nor his mother nor his wife nor his son nor his kinsmen will remain in his company—his virtue alone will adhere to him. Single is each man born, single he dies, single he receives the reward of his good or single the punishment of his evil deeds. When he leaves his body like clay on the ground, his kindred retire with averted face but his virtue accompanies his soul continually. Therefore he desires let him collect virtue for the sake of securing an inseparable companion, since with virtue for his guide, he will traverse a gloom how hard to be traversed."

(*Manu Smriti* 8-17, 4-239 to 242)

APPENDIX B

OFFSPRINGS OF MIXED CASTES (VARNA SANKARAS)

APPENDIX B

Offsprings of mixed Castes
I Union of Castes-Anuloma

Man	Woman	Manu	Vasishtha	Bauddhāyana	Gotama	Vishnu	Others
Br	Br	Br	Br	Br	Br	Br	Brāhmana
Br	Ksh		Ambashtha	Brāhmana	Ambashtha	Kshatriya	Murdhāvashak
Br	Vais	Ambashtha		Ambashtha	Dauśhyanta	Vaishya	Bhryukantak
Br	Sud.	Nishāda, Pāra	Pāra'sava	Nishāda, Pāra	Nishāda	Sudra	Paasava
Ksh	Ksh.	Ksh.	Ksh	Ksh	Ksh	Ksh	Ksh
Ksh	Vai	Ugra	Ugra	Kshatriya	Ugra	Vaishya	Māushya
Ksh	Sud.			Ugra	Pāra'sava	Sudra	Yavana
Vai.	Vai.	Vai.	Vai	Vaishya	Vaishya	Vaishya	Vaishya
Vai	Sud		Nishāda	Rathakara		Sudra	Karana
Sud	Sud	Sud	Sudra	Sudra	Sudra	Sudra	Sudra

II Union of Castes-Pratiloma.

Sud	Br	Chāndāla	Chāndāla	Chāndāla	Chāndāla	Chāndāla	Chāndāla
Sud	Ksh.	Kshatta	Vaina	Kshatta	Kshatta	Magadha	Pulkasa
Sud.	Vai	Āyogava	Autyāvasāyin	Magadha	Āyogava	Āyogava	Vadehaka
Vai.	Br	Vadeha	Rāmaka	Vadeha	Vadeha	Vadeha	Magadha
Vai	Ksh	Magadha	Pulkasa	Āyogava	Magadha	Pulkasa	Dhivara
Ksh	Br	Suta	Suta	Suta	Suta	Suta	Suta

III. Mixed-Caste Unions with the Main Castes.

<i>Man.</i>	<i>Woman.</i>	<i>Caste of the offspring.</i>
Brāhmaṇa	Ugra	Āvrita (Manu)
Do.	Ambastha.	Ābhira (Manu)
Do.	Āyogava	Dhigvana (Manu)
Nishāda	Sudra	Pukkasa (Manu)
Do	Vais'ya	Do. (Baudhāyana)
Sudra	Nishāda	Kukkuṭaka (Manu)
Vaisya	Nishāda }	Do. (Baudhāyana)
Pukkasa	Do. }	... ..
Ambashtha	Brāhmaṇa	S'vapāka (Baudhāyana)
Ugra	Kshatriya	Vaina (Baudhāyana)

IV. Union of Mixed-Castes.

<i>Man.</i>	<i>Woman.</i>	<i>Caste of the offspring.</i>
Vaidehaka	Āyogava	Maitreyaka (Manu)
Nishāda	Vaidehaka	Kārāvara (Manu)
		Āhindika
Chāndāla	Do.	Pāndusopāka (Manu)
Kshatta	Ugra	S'vapāka (Manu)
Nishāda	Āyogava	Mārgava, Dāsa, or Kaivarta (Manu)
Chāndāla	Pukkasa	Sopāka (Manu)
Do.	Nishāda	Antyāvasāyin (Manu)
Vaidehaka	Ambashtha	Vena (Manu)
		Vaina (Baudhāyana)
Ugra	Kshatta	S'vapāka (Baudhāyana)

Note.—Tables I to IV above are taken from 'Racial synthesis in Hindu culture by S. V. Vishwanath.'

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Present reading</i>	<i>Correct reading</i>
11	30	Reconciliation	Reconciliation
13	3	called	are called
15	19	pristime	pristino
15	35	Do	Do
16 (20)	8	idean	ideals
16 (24)	5	reformer	reformers
19	32	Homer	Homor "
19	33	Macdonald	Macdonell.
20	7	Do	Do
26	25	bottle	battle
27	11	develored	developed
29	last line	oblation	oblations
36	21	The	Thus
36	27	Vadic	Vedio
37	20	Macdonalad	Macdonell
37	28	Do	Do
40	last but one line	Disinct	distinct
58	8	Principal	2 Principal
67	13	Shotaketu	S'rotaketu
70	foot note 1	K. U	Ka. U
72	foot note 3	K. U	Ka. U
76	8	Verbatim	verbatum.
86	28	and asserted	and of whom Vallabh has asserted
100	32	ont-castes	out-casts
118	13	800 B C	600 B C.
124	15	4 Ethics	IV Ethics.
152	3	Comus	Come

<i>Page.</i>	<i>Line.</i>	<i>Present reading.</i>	<i>Correct reading.</i>
152	4	Do	Do
156	13	where	whereby
157	27	men	man
167	2	a constitutes	constitutes
177	3	liberty	liberality
181	10	Sutras	Shastras
195	4	Caste ¹	Caste
209	13	Vivah Home	Vivāha Homa
209	Foot-note 5	Sk. G. S.	Sh. G. S.
212	Foot-note 2	Ancient Sanskrit	Sanskrit
212	Do 8	Do	Do
216	Do 1	Y. S. 22	V. D. S. 17-70.
217	Do 2	Y. S.	V. D. S.
217	Do 3	V. S 18-1 to 3	V. D. S. 28-1 to 3.
218	Foot-note nos. 2, 3 & 4	2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3.
229	25	an existence	no existence
244	1	(viii)	(ix)
245	8	(ix)	(x)
246	30	(x)	(xi)
248	8	(xi)	(xii)
257	8	forcement	enforcement.
280	Foot-note 1	A. D. S. 2-5-10, 11	A. D. S. 2-5-11-10, 11
297	19	and sacrifices	sacrifices
311	last but one line	Ashramas	Āśīamas.
320	18	in the	in the number
339	Foot note nos. 5, 5, 6	Nos 5, 5, 6	Nos. 5, 6, 7.
340	14	for	far.
360	21	drives	derives
387	23	(x)	(ix)
388	24	out-castes	Out-casts
388	28	(xi)	(x)
398	6	indicrete	indiscreet

INDEX OF AUTHORS

The method of transliteration adopted herein follows that adopted by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Poona

- Abbe Dubois 245
 Angirus 360
 Annie Beasant 5
 Āpastambha 208, 222, 280, 286, 324, 329, 331, 337, 339, 341
 Aristotle 4
 Āśhvalāyana 22, 321
 Atri 341, 359, 360, 361, 368
 Bādarāyana or Vyāsa 11, 120, 122, 281, 325
 Bauddhāyana 296
 Bhandarkar 116, 120, 121
 Bradley 9, 15, 83
 Brīhaspati 185, 225, 242
 Buch M. A. 16 (8), 376
 Buhler 16 (11), 184, 203, 332
 Chandāvarkar J. 230
 Colebrook 83
 Dakṣha 328, 329
 Dayānand Swāmi 347
 Deussen Paul Dr. 4, 5, 12, 55, 59, 84, 102
 Dhruva A. B. 349
 Dixit 20
 Dutta N. K. 267, 270, 272, 318, 320, 354, 356, 362, 363
 Dutta R. C. 27, 229, 377
 Einstein 15, 16 (5)
 Empedocles 4
 Fa-Hien 355
 Frazer 229
 Gandhi M. K. 126, 349, 358, 361
 Gangānath Jha Dr. 261
 Gaudapada 83
 George Birdwood 16 (15), 188
 Ghobhla 216, 221
 Gotama 11, 122, 182, 215, 219, 220, 325, 329, 367
 Gough 12, 83, 85, 104
 Govindarāja 322
 Griffith 282
 Haug 27, 268, 273
 Havell 16 (23)
 Herbert Spencer 96
 Hiriyana 88
 Holloman 87
 Indirā Raman Shāstri 349
 Ishvara Kṛṣṇa 123
 Jacob 12
 Jacobi Prof. 20
 Jaimini 11, 12, 16 (3) 52, 249, 253, 280
 Jolly 244
 Kanāda 11, 16(3) 122
 Kant 83, 374
 Kapila 11 46, 121, 123
 Kātyāyana 185
 Keith A. B. 188, 269
 Kern Prof. 268, 273
 Kulluka 211, 214, 218, 220, 222, 243, 278, 322
 Kumarila Bhatta 11
 Macdonell 19, 21, 212, 229, 266, 267, 320
 Mādhava 122, 185, 243, 284
 Madhva 13, 16 (2)

- Mahidhara 346
 Manu 184, 211, 216, 218, 219, 220, 223, 224, 226, 227, 228, 230, 232, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 242, 244, 245, 249, 251, 252, 254, 255, 256, 260, 262, 263, 264, 266, 278, 279, 281, 282, 283, 286, 287, 290, 291, 294, 295, 296, 307, 311, 313, 315, 317, 318, 321, 322, 324, 328, 329, 332, 336, 340, 341, 347, 368, 392, 393.
 Maxmuller 12, 19, 20, 21, 41, 46, 52, 59, 127, 391
 Medhātithi 185, 203, 211, 214, 242, 278, 322
 Megasthenes 119
 Moore Dr. 27
 Muller D F Sir 231, 234
 Nandana 203
 Nandapandita 242
 Nārada 185, 205, 211, 215, 219, 232, 241, 242, 244
 Nietzsche 187
 Nesfield 273
 Nimbārka 13
 Parmenides 83
 Pāṇini 23, 118, 148
 Pārāśara 185, 186, 215, 216, 221, 242, 260, 261, 283, 284, 323, 324, 328, 330, 331, 332, 333, 339, 341, 342, 378, 387
 Patanjali 11, 117, 122
 Plato 4, 83
 Przyluski 356
 Pushpadanta 402
 Pythagoras 4
 Rādhākṛṣṇa Śrī 16(43), 313, 398, 402
 Rāghavānanda 203, 239
 Ragozin 245
 Rāmānujāchārya 13, 16(2) 16(6), 86, 105, 120, 121, 149, 307
 Roth 27, 53
 Samvarta 341, 360
 Sāyana 52, 53, 111, 263, 345
 Schlegel 185
 Schopenhaur 55
 Shakespere 83
 S'ankaiāchārya or S'ankara 4, 11, 12, 13, 16(2), 16(6), 43, 88, 120, 132, 135, 138, 148, 156, 307
 S'āṅkhāyana 321
 Shridhara Swāmī 142
 Socrates 4
 Sus'ruta 222, 296
 Telang 127
 Thibeaup 12
 Tilak B. G. 20, 111, 126, 396
 Vaidya C. V. 20, 111, 119
 Vallabhāchārya or Vallabha 13, 16 (2), 16 (6), 60, 78, 86, 88, 121, 150, 155
 Vasistha 180, 182, 185, 215, 217, 233, 241.
 Vātsyāyana 241
 Victor Cousin 55
 Vijnānes'vara 16 (12) 186, 220
 Vishvanāth S. V. 355
 Vivekānand Swāmī 188
 Vyāsa Smṛiti 361, 366
 Wheeler 247
 William Jones 184
 Wilson 53
 Yājñavalkya 185, 186, 216, 221, 232, 238, 240, 257, 300, 301, 323, 324, 328, 329, 335, 336, 339
 Yama 341, 360
 Yaska 52, 53, 269, 345

INDEX OF SANSKRIT WORDS WITH A GLOSSARY

References to the principal occurrences of important Sanskrit words chiefly technical are given here with explanations and cross references to the General Index where necessary for convenience. The numerals at the end refer to pages of the book.

- Abhaya**—Fearlessness 177, 418
Abhyasa—Repeated practice 145, 172
Āchaman—Sipping of water for purification 329
Āchara—Conduct, 16 (9), 251, 254, 255
Āchira Kānda—Section of the Dharma Śāstras dealing with rules of conduct, individual and social 183
Ācharya—The teacher who initiates a pupil and teaches him the Veda. He is also called Guru or spiritual guide 286, 289
Adharma—Unrighteousness or sin by lapse of duty 300, 378
Adhibhūta—Essential existence or Being (God) as manifested in perishable objects in relation to the physical aspect 146
Adhidaiva—The essential deity (God) in relation to the intellectual aspect regulating objectively the cosmic forces of nature and manifested as devas or gods 145, 146
Adhyojana—Essential sacrifice or Brahman as identical with Kṛishna in his incarnated bodily form as an object of worship being the very self (Ātma) of sacrifice 417
Adhyatma—The essential self (God) in relation to the spiritual aspect regulating subjectively the inward senses of individuals and manifested as their innermost self 115, 146, 154
Advaita or non-dual monism 87 (See Monism general index)
Ādya Puruṣa—The primal person 46, 129
Āhinyā—One who was not fit to be killed in war 320
Agni—1 Fire 33 2 three sacred fires in which domestic sacrifices were made viz Gṛhṛpatiya, Āhavanīya and Dakṣiṇa 305
Agni Ādhvāna or **Agni Ādhyeṇa**—The ceremony of kindling the sacred fire 180, 246, 289, 369
Agni hotra—Daily obligatory worship of the sacred fire by making offerings thereto 180, 297, 305
Agni Parinayana—Part of the marriage ceremony called circumambulation or leading the bride round the nuptial fire 210
Ahimsā—Non-slaughter of or abstention from injury to animals 16 (20), 29, 106, 120, 176, 177, 319, 322, 417
Ajñāna—Ignorance 177, 418

Akshara—The eternal, imperishable and unchanging Brahman 78, 88, 146, 151, 154, 163, 164, 173

Akshara Dhāma—Eternal and immutable abode of Brahman from which there is no rebirth 163

Akshatā Yoni—A virgin or a woman who had no marital intercourse with any person 239, 240 241

Amritatva—State of deathlessness or immortality, i.e. emancipation 102, 162

Anantaras—Sons begotten by Āryans on women of next lower castes 276, 277

Ananya—i.e. not separated or detached from the worshipper 155

Anāsas—Persons who could not utter civilised or refined language i.e. Un-Āryans or Dasyus 36

Anga—See Vedānga

Ansha—A part of a whole, that which occupies a subordinate position 158

Antahkarāna—Inner sense which is a product of not-self 153

Antaryāmin—Brahman as inner guide and controller 76, 77, 136

Antyaja—Backward classes (see general index)

Antyajanāh—Outcasts residing at the end of a city or village 347

Antyāvasāyin—One who stays at the end of a city i.e. a chāndāla or an untouchable 340

Antyes'ti—Funeral rites which constitute the last religious sacrament 263

Anuloma—(1) Union or marriage of a male of a higher caste with a female of a lower caste (2) Offspring of such marriage 16 (16), 198, 204, 275, 276

Ānvishiki or Nyāya—Logic 23

Anyā Devatāh—Other Gods to whom an otherness is ascribed 141

Apapātia—Outcast persons to whom food was given from broken vessels, which had to be thrown away subsequently 277, 316, 340

Āpat-Kāla—Distressed time 262

Apātia—One who is rendered unworthy to receive gifts on account of sinful conduct 386

Apaurusheya—Not made by any person but by God. It refers to the revealed scriptures of the Āryans 9, 19

Apurva—Unseen religious merit which results from religious works as sacrifice 16 (3), 16 (9), 25, 249

Āranyakas—Forest books for anchorites 54

Ardhanārīs'vara—God Shiva with his consort Pārvatī constituting the left half of his body 313

Ardhānganā—A wife as the better half of her husband constituting his half body 201

Ājavam—Uprightness 106, 176, 177, 418

- Artha**—Worldly object or wealth as an aim of life 16 (9) 218
- Arthavāda**—Explanatory or eulogistic statements which have no obligatory force like commandments or injunctions 12, 25, 262
- Artha Veda**—The science of arts e.g. sculpture, carving etc. It is an Upaveda or supplement to the Veda 24
- Asanga Sastra**—Axe of detachment 129
- Asajunda**—One who is not related to another within seven degrees from a common ancestor so as to prevent their marriage 203
- Asat**—(1) Unreal 61, 83, 89
(2) Unmanifest 45 89, 132
- Ashmarolūka**—Part of the marriage rite in which the bride is made to tread on a stone for acquiring firmness to overcome enemies 210
- Āshrama Dharma**—Duties relating to the four orders of life 287
- Ashuchikaraṇa**—An act which makes a man impure but not degrade him so as to be outcasted 286
- Ashvattha**—The sacred Fig-tree, which ever changes. It stands for not-self which is ever changing and unreal 129
- Asprasya**—Untouchable 360
- Asura**—(1) Wise spirit, used for Varuna 30 (2) Aborigines 35, (3) Devils 3
- and Āryans feuds between 35
- leaders of — Vritra 32, 35
Vala 35, Sambara 35,
- Gods of—Nagas (serpents) 36, 113
Phallus, 36, Monkeys 113
Bears 113, Birds 113
- Āsuri Sampat**—Devilish nature 175
- Atharva Veda**—The fourth Veda 21
- Āthirva or Adhvaryu**—The priestly class belonging to the Zoroastrian faith of the Parsis 268
- Āthiravans**—Deceased ancestors (Pitans) invoked for blessings 50
- Ati Krichhra**—See Prāyascitta
- Ātithya**—Hospitality 105
- Ātman**—Self, Spirit or Soul 62, 63 74 79, 129
- Parama—Supreme Self or God 14, 164
- Mahat or Mahantman—The great soul of Brahman as its first born 80
- Pratyag—Inner Self or Spirit 130 (See general index)
- Ātma-tushti**—Self-satisfaction 254
- Ātmavinigraha**—Self-restraint 176
- Āvaruddha Stree**—A concubine or one who is in the exclusive keeping of a person 241
- Avatara**—Incarnation of God 118 136, 137, 138
- Avidyā**—Ignorance of the soul, or cosmic ignorance 156

- Avyākṛita**—Unmanifest state of the names and forms of the phenomenal world about to be evolved 89
- Avyakta**—(1) Unmanifest state of nature or not-self from which its three strands, satva, rajas, and tamas are evolved 151
(2) The supreme being who is unmanifest 164
- Āyurveda**—Science of medicine
It is an Upaveda or supplement to Vedas 23
- Bāhya**—One who is outcasted from the Āryan community 276
- Beeja**—Seed of a person which is sown in the soil (Kshetia i.e. woman) 199
- Bhakti**—Devotion 137, 140, 142, 143, 166
- Bhakti Mārga**—The path of devotion leading to the Supreme Being 16 (1), 166
- Bhārata Sāvitrī**—Memorable verses in the Mahābhārata eulogising virtue 125
- Bhoktri or Bhoktā**—The embodied soul who is the enjoyer of sensual pleasures 63, 92, 159
- Bhuman or Bhumā**—Infinitude 68, 71
- Brahmachāri**—Student (see orders of life general index)
- Brahmacharya Vrata**—The vow of celibacy strictly enjoined for a student 290, 295, 366
- Brahmaloka**—The heavenly abode to which the worshippers of Brahman with attributes have access after death 72, 104 304
- Brahman**—The absolute (See general Index)
Para—The Supreme Being 14, 60
Apara—The lower Brahman 60
Nirguna—Without attributes 60
Saguna—With attributes 60, 76
Mahad—i.e. nature (Prakṛiti) 151 born from Akshara 173
Nirvānam—eternal peace 163
- Brāhmana caste**—(See general index)
- Brāhmanas**—Portions of the Vedas which deal with the procedure about the performance of Vedic sacrifices and rites 22, 24, 25
- Budhi**—(1) Intellect 93; (2) Cosmic reason 152
- Budhi Yoga**—Practice of discernment i.e. work without desire 168
- Chāndrāyana**—See Prāyaschitta
- Charana**—Vedic schools or colleges 22
- Charu**—Boiled messes of food offered as domestic sacrifice 305
- Chāturvarna**—The institutions of four castes, their duties 16 (12), 173, 193, 264, 282
- Dahara**—See Vidyā
- Daivi Sampat**—Divine nature 175
- Dama**—Self-restraint 105, 106, 177, 418
- Dāna**—Gift 48, 106, 177, 8, 379, 418

Dānava—Devil 35

Dars'an—Perception or direct vision, system of philosophy 1, 3, 402

Dāsī—A female slave or a maid servant 316, 338, 369

Dayā—Mercy 106, 177, 418

Deva—The bright gods worshipped by the Aryans as opposed to those worshipped by the Un-Āryans 36

Devatā—Gods (Vedic) 29

(a) Celestial

Varuna 30, 38, 371, 372

Surya (Sun), 31, 39, Vishnu

31, 49, 78, 163 Mitra (sun) 37,

39 Savitṛi (Sun) 39, Pushan

39, Ashvin 39 Usus (dawn)

39 Dyaus (sky) 39, Rātri

(night) 35, 39

(b) Atmospheric

Indra 31, 32, 39 Rudra 32

33, 39, Maruts 34 39 41,

Apām Napāt 39 Vāyu (wind)

39 Parjanya (rain) 39, Āpas

or Āpah (waters) 39 43

(c) Terrestrial

Agni (fire) 33, 39, Soma 33,

34, 39 Pṛithivī (earth) 39

(d) Abstract

Shraddhā (Faith) 37 Manyu

(anger) 37, Kāma (love) 37,

Dhatṛi (Creator) 37

(e) Female Gods

Vāc (goddess of speech) 35,

Sarasvatī 35, Aranyāmi 35

Indrāni 35, Varunāni 35

Āgneyi 35

(f) Miscellaneous

Mitra - Varuna 34, Dyāvā -

Pṛithivī (sky and earth) 34,

Rubhus 34, Adityah 34 39,

Rudras (Rudra gods) 39, Vasus

(terrestrial gods) 39, 40, Vishve

Devāh 34, 40, Prajāpati 37,

39, 42, 43 Brahmā 37, 39,

Bṛhaspati 37, Brahmanapati

43, Dakṣa- 42, Twastṛi 42

Vishvakarman 43 Hiranya-

garbha 43, Purusha 46, Virāt

46, Aditi 37 Diti 37

Devatā—Gods (Epic)

Rudra-Shiva 78, 114, Shiva

113, 115 116, 117, Mahādeva 115,

Vishnu 78, 113, 117, 118, 137,

Narāyana 118, 119 Rāma

118, Kṛishṇa 118, 119 Tri-

murti 114 Purushottama 78,

Umā 115 Durgā 114, 119,

Lakṣmī 113, 199, Rādhā 121,

Kārtikeya 113 119 Vāsudeva

114, 120 Shankarshana 120,

Pradyumna 120, Anuruddha 120

Devayāna—Path leading to the

abode of the gods 99, 160

Dhāma—Eternal and immutable

abode of peace and joy as the

supreme goal of life 163

Dhanurveda—Science of archery

It is an Upa-Veda or supplement

to Veda 23

Dharma—Religion or morality

16 (4)

—Derivation of 16 (3), 248

—Definitions of 10 (3), 16 (4)

- Meanings of—Religion, righteousness or virtue, Spiritual Merit, duty, and Law 16 (3), 16 (9) 16(20), 143, 153, 248, 300
- Aim of life 16 (9) 248
- Righteousness or virtue 16 (20), 112, 124, 174, 177, 181, 182, 192, 300, 303
- Legal duty 16(3), 16(9), 248, 249
- In the Veda 25, 28
- In the Epics 112, 124
- In the Gītā 174, 177
- In the Dharma Sutras 181, 182
- In Manu Smṛiti 192, 300, 303
- Pravṛtti—religion of works and duty 249
- Nivṛtti—religion of renunciation and knowledge 249
- Dharma Shāstras—Codes of law in the form of verses 16(9), 16(10), 16 (11), 183, 186 (see general index)
- Dharma Sūtras—Short aphorisms in prose on law, virtue, conduct etc. 180, 182
- Dhṛiti—Fortitude 177, 418
- Dhyāna—Meditation of God with devotion 141, 166, 310
- Dikṣā—Initiation for Vedic sacrifice 288
- Divākṛti—One who is allowed to move about in day time only (i.e. a Chāṇḍāl) 311
- Durakṛta—Bad conduct 251
- Dvandva—Pairs of opposites (e.g. love and hate, joy and sorrow, etc.) 129, 157, 158
- Dvija—Twice born person, the first birth being from parents and the second from initiation by the teacher 16 (12), 288
- Ekāntika—Monotheistic religion as observed by the Vaiṣṇavas of the Pancharātra School 120
- Ekapatnī—A faithful and dutiful wife having one husband only 228
- Gandharvaveda—Science of music. It is a supplement (Upaveda) to Veda 23
- Garbhādhiāna—Rite of consummation of marriage 220, 263
- Gāyatrī—The sacred hymn of the R̥g Veda containing prayer of sun God and chanted by every Brāhman as a part of his daily morning religious duty 31, 195
- Gokula—Place of birth of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa 121
- Goloka—Heavenly abode of God Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa 102, 118
- Gotra—Family name derived from the name of its original founder 271
- Grihapatnī—The newly wedded wife as queen and mistress of the house 211, 213
- Grihastha—Householder (see orders of life, general index)
- Guna—Strands or constituents of nature (Prakṛti) who have three in number viz. (1) Sattva (the principle of purity and knowledge) (2) Rājas (the principle of energy and activity) and (3) Tamas (the

principle of darkness and ignorance 143, 150, 151, 152, 153, 171

Suru—The Brahmana priest who as a venerable person performs the religious domestic rites 288

Hayyavāhana—Sacrificial fire which carries the offerings to gods 33

Hira yugarbha—The golden germ or the first born who created the world 41, 42, 43

Homa—Sacrificial offerings in the fire 283

Indriya—Senses of perception and action five of each 93

Isha or Isvara—Supreme God as ruler of the Universe 14, 77 132, 136, 147

Ishita—Works of sacrifice 302, 303

Ishāsa—History 297

Japa—Muttering of holy prayer as Sandhya 283

Jātaka—Books of Buddhist literature 354

Jātavedas—One who knows all created beings in the holy fire 33

Jāti—Small groups of castes determined as such by birth, also professional castes 271 272, 273

Jāti—Brahma's—A sinful act making a man liable to be outcasted from his caste 380 386

Jñāna Kānda—Section of the Śruti including Upaśhads dealing with spiritual knowledge and philosophy 14

Jñāna Mārga—The spiritual knowledge leading to the Supreme Being 16 (1), 165

Kailāsa—Heavenly abode of God Shiva 102, 118

Kāma—(1) God of love 37, (2) Sensual desire as an aim of life 16 (9) 248 (3) Lust 419

Kanyā—Unmarried girl a virgin 239, 241 Nagnika 215 216 Gauri 215, 216 Kanyā 215, 216, Rajasvalā 215 Ritumati 216, Rohini 216

Kanyādāna—Part of the marriage ceremony in which the girl is given in marriage to the bridegroom for protection 208

Karma—Actions law of or retribution (see general index)

Karmas'raya—Substrate of actions 93

Karma Kanda—Work section of the Vedas dealing with actions 14

Karma Mārga—The path of action leading to the Supreme Being 16 (1), 166

Karmayoga—The doctrine of action without desire 168

Karunā—Compassion 176

Kevalādvaita—Doctrine of non-dual monism or absolute idealism 16 (6)

Kosla—Shenli Annamaya 94 95 Prānamaya 94 95 Manomaya 94, 95, Vijnānamaya 94 95, Ānandamaya 94 95

Kravyad—Funeral fire which devours corpses 38

Krichhīa - Ati - Krichhra — See
Piāyaschitta

Kshamā—Long suffering 178, 418

Kshānti—Long suffering or endurance 177

Kshara—The perishable existence identified with lower nature (Piakriti-Kshetia) 145, 146, 151

Kshatā Yoni—A non-virgin whose virginity was destroyed by sexual intercourse with a man 240, 241

Kshetia—The field or nature (Piakriti), or physical body 134, 151, 152, 159, 160

—The soil in which the seed is sown i.e. a woman 199

Kshetrāja—The son begotten on the wife of a person by another by Niyoga 235

Kshetiajña—The knower of the field or the true self, individual or cosmic 134, 151, 152, 155, 159, 160

Kutastha—The imperishable, unchanging and immutable Brahman which is exalted over the objects of nature and untouched by them 88, 146

Loka—World

Brahma—Of Brahman 99, 104, 160, 161

Deva—Of gods 49, 160, 161

Pitri—Of fathers 48, 49, 50, 161

Sukrita—As reward for good deeds 48

Patī—Of husband 229

Bhuta—Of ghosts 161

Lōkasangraha—Philanthropic and altruistic works of general usefulness 147

Madhu—See Vidyā

Madhuparka—(1) Ceremony of honouring a distinguished guest visiting a householder with a repast of flesh etc 16 (23), 300, 322, 323 (2) Compound of honey, milk, curd, ghee and sugar offered to a distinguished guest 335

Mahābhuta—Five great elements 152

Mahā Vākyañi—Supreme propositions in the Upanishads 66

Mahad Brahman — The great Brahman as the womb and matrix of the universe. It stands for nature (Piakriti) 151

—Ātman—The great soul of Brahman as its first born 80

Mahāpātakas—Mortal or grave sins 182, 285, 315, 380, 384

Maitia—Friendly 176

Malāvaha—Sins which make a man impure but not make him liable to be outcasted from his caste 386

Māmsah—Flesh (i.e. the animal killed will eat me in the next world) 318

Manas—Mind 93

Mantras — Metrical verses and formulas in the Vedas 22, 25

Mātariśvan—The Indian Prometheus who brought the celestial

- fire from the heaven to the earth 33
- Mannja or Upanayana—Rite of initiation to the sacred thread of a twice-born person 263
- Mannibandhana—The tying of the girdle of grass round the waist as a part of the initiation ceremony of the twice-born 288
- Mayā—(1) Nature (Prakṛti) or not-self, 85, 131, 143
- (2) Illusion or delusion 68, 83, 85, 129, 139, 144, 155
- (3) Delusive power of God 155, 156
- (4) Ignorance (Avidyā) 156
- (5) Mysterious power of Brahman 15, 16 63
- Māyā Shakti—Mysterious power of Brahman, the Supreme Being; cosmic immanent power 15, 16, 63 130, 132
- Maya-Vāda—The theory of illusion or unreality of the world 43, 62, 83-88, 155, 156
- Mīmāṃsā or Purva Mīmāṃsā—System of philosophy of Vedic rites and rituals and dealing with interpretation of the Vedas 10, 12, 16 (3), 23, 280 (See general index)
- Moha—Delusion, 419
- Mohajāla—Net of illusion, 419
- Moksha—(1) Emancipation, release salvation, deliverance, absolute or perfect freedom as the supreme goal of life 54 see Mukti (2) an aim of life 16(9), 248
- Mukhya Prāna—Chief (vital) breath 95
- Mukti—Emancipation or perfect freedom 1, 54 (See emancipation, general index)
- Videha Mukti—Achieved after death 14, 105
- Jīvan Mukti—Achieved even during life before one's death 14, 75, 105
- Krama Mukti—Graded emancipation achieved by gradations and stages 105
- Navedya—Offering of food made to a god 315
- Naraka—Hell, 419
- Nasadiya Snkta—A philosophical hymn of the Rig Veda containing the germ of Māyā Vāda 43-46
- Nirvāna—(1) Entry into the abyss of void in Buddhism 163 (2) eternal peace within Brahma the Absolute according to the Gītā 163
- Nishādashapati—The chief of the tribe of Nishādas 369
- Nishedha—An injunction or a prohibitory statement restraining a specified act 25 261, 389
- Nivṛtti—Renunciation or cessation of action, 249 419
- Niyama—Rule regulating ceremonial observances and conduct 301, 328
- Niyama Vidhi or Vidhi Niyama—A positive rule of commandment or injunction in the holy texts 25, 222, 228, 261, 322, 323

- Niyoga—The practice of begetting a male offspring on the wife or widow of another 235 et seq
- Nyāya or Anvikshikī—Logic; or system of philosophy dealing with logic 10, 23, 122, 297
- Panchagavya—A purificatory drink of five ingredients, viz cow's urine, dung, milk, curd and clarified butter to be taken by a sinner for penance 331, 381
- Panchāgni—See Vidyā
- Panchāgni tapa—Heat of 5 fires to which an anchorite exposed himself in summer 306
- Pancha Janah—People of the five tribes 106, 269, 345, 346
- Pañchama—The fifth class which was outside the pale of caste 36, 198, 266
- Pañcha Mahā Yajna—Five great daily sacrifices viz Deva Yajna (to gods), Brahma Yajna (to the Vedic Rishis), Pitṛi Yajna (to the ancestors), Bhuta Yajna (to living creatures) and Nara Yajna (to man e.g. guest) 16 (14), 195–197, 297, 305
- Panch Nakhah—Five toed animals whose flesh was interdicted except of five specified animals 318
- Pāṃ-Grahana—Part of marriage ceremony in which the bridegroom takes hold of the hand of the bride 201, 209
- Para or Parama—Higher
Para Brahma 14, 60, 64, 132
- Para or Parama Purush 156, 164
- Para Akshara 164
- Para Avyakta 164
- Paramātmān 14, 164
- Parā Prakṛiti (Higher Nature) 151
- Parama pada—The highest step of God Vishnu i.e. the highest heaven 31, 49, 117, 118
- Parāka—See Piāyaschitta
- Paramparā—Traditional mode of handing down knowledge in regular succession 16 (10), 254, 289
- Parapurvā Pati—Husband of a married woman 243
- Parināma Vāda—The theory of creation by conversion of God 88, 149
- Parisankhyā—A negative rule in a text interdicting a certain act with an option giving permission only to do a certain positive act 222, 223, 322, 323
- Parishad — Legal Assembly of learned persons competent to decide doubtful points of law etc. 258, 380, 388, 389
- Parva—Certain holy days in a month interdicted for marital intercourse and on which one was enjoined to worship images of gods, 220, 299
- Parjānaka—See Vidyā.
- Paśupatāstra—A missile of war given to Arjuna by God Shiva. 115.
- Patiloka—The world of husband in the heaven reached by a

- faithful and virtuous wife after her death where she is reunited with her deceased husband, amidst celestial pleasures '29
- Patitas—Degraded and outcast persons, 298
- Paunarblhava—The son of a re-married woman, 239
- Pavamāni—Certain purificatory verses of the Rig Veda glorifying God Soma to be uttered by a sinner undergoing a certain penance 382
- Pitṛ—Deceased fathers or ancestors staying in the higher worlds, enjoying celestial pleasures in company with the gods, 48, 49
- Pitṛyāna—Path leading to the abode of deceased fathers, 99, 160
- Prajapati—The creator, 37, 42
- Prājāpatya Kṛcchra—See Prājāyachitta.
- Prājña—The individual soul in a state of dreamless sleep, 95
- Prakṛiti—(1) Nature or not-self consisting of three strands (gunas) satva (principle of purity and knowledge), rajas (principle of energy) and tamas (principle of darkness) which are in a state of equipoise and rest before creation until disturbed by contact of Purusha or (the principle of consciousness) when evolution or creation of the world takes place 45, 134, 151, 152, 153 156, 157, 171, 178; (2) Illusion or Māyā 85, 156, (3) Ignorance (Avidyā) 156
- Parā—Higher self 143, 145
- Aparā—Lower self or not-self 143 145 (See Nature general index)
- Prāṇas—Vital breaths Prāṇa 93, Vyāṇa 93, Samāna 93, and Udāna 93 Mukhya 95
- Prāṇashakti—Potential energy of God, 150
- Prapatti—The path of dedication and surrender of oneself to God as a means to emancipation, 149
- Prasādana—The power of regulating the universe by commandments of the Supreme Being, 76
- Prasthāna Trayī—The three canonical books of highest authority in the orthodox schools of philosophy, viz. the Vedas or Sr̥pt, the Bhagwad Gītā, and Vedānta or Brahma Sutras, 18, 128
- Prasutā—A woman who has given birth to a child, 241
- Pratiloma—(1) Union or marriage of a female of higher caste with a male of lower caste (2) Also hybrid offspring of such marriage, 16 (16), 198, 204, 205, 275, 276, 277
- Prātisakhyas—Vedic readers or text-books for different schools of Vedas, 22
- Pratisthā—Place of refuge or seat of activities 180, 158, 163

- Pravara**—Names of certain leading Rishis by which a particular Āryan family (gotra) of the twice-born is distinguished, 271.
- Pravritti Dharmā** — Religion of duty and works 249, 419
- Prāyaschitta** — Penances. Prājāpatya Krichhra, 381, Sāntapan Krichhra 381, Tapta Krichhra 382, Pañāka 381, Ati Krichhra, 382, Krichhra Ati Krichhra, 382, Chāndiāyana, 305, 378, 382, 383, Tulāpurusha 378.
- Prāyaschitta Kānda**—Section of the Dharmā Shāstras dealing with penances for atonement of sins, 184.
- Preyas**—Mundane good, 107.
- Prokshita**—Sprinkled with consecrated water, 317.
- Pujā**—Worship of idols and images of gods 283, 284, 291, 299
- Punarbhū**—A remarried woman, 240, 241
- Punarjanma**—The doctrine of reincarnation or rebirth in bodily form (See transmigration of the soul, general index)
- Punassanskāra**—The rite of re-initiation e. g. second marriage of a woman, 239, 240
- Puranas**—Old mythological chronicles as a source of authority (See general index).
- Putam**—Works of charities, erecting alms houses, building hostels, hospitals etc. 302, 303
- Purusha**—The principle of intelligence and self-consciousness in a person 45, 46, 123, 145, 146, 151, 152
- Ādya**—Primeval person or the first cause, 129
- Parama**—Supreme person i.e. God 156, 164
- Divyam** — Supreme celestial person i.e. God 164
- Adhidaiva** — Essential deity manifested as God and controlling objectively the forces of nature 146
- Akshara**—Imperishable person 146, 151
- Kshara**—Perishable person with reference to nature 146, 151
- Purushottama**—The supreme person or Brahman 145, 164
- Purushārtha**—Aims or purposes of life
- Dharma**—(Virtue) 248; Artha—(wealth) 248, 249, Kāma—(Desire of worldly good) 248, 249, Moksha — (Emancipation) 248, 249
- Purusha Sukta** — Philosophical hymn of creation in the Rig Veda, showing the divine origin of the four castes 46
- Purushottama** — The Supreme person or Brahman 78, 145, 146, 164
- Purva-Mīmāṃsa**—See Mīmāṃsa.
- Putra**—Son—Fourteen kinds of—
- Aurasa** — (legitimate) 207;

Putrikā Putra—(Daughters son) 207, **Kshetraja**—(begotten on the wife of another by Niyoga) 207 **Gudhaja** (born secretly) 207 **Kanina** (Maiden's son) 207, **Sahodha**—(son taken with the bride to her newly wedded husband) 207 **Pannar bhava**—(son born to a remarried woman) 208, **Nishad**—(son by a Sndra wife) 208 **Parāsava**—(son by a concubine) 208, **Dattaka**—(adopted son) 208, **Kṛtrina**—(son made artificially) 208, **Kṛta**—(son bought for a price) 208, **Appaviddha**—(son cast off) 208, **Swayamdatt**—(son self given) 208

Rajas—The component strand or constituent of physical nature which is the principle of energy 152, 158

Rākshasa—Devils or uncivilised aborigines 112

Rāma-Rājya—Ideal rule of Rāma 112

Rig-Veda—21

Rik or **Richa**—Metrical hymns of the Rig Veda 21

Rita—(1) Law and order and harmony 80, 371 (2), right dealing (arjavam) 105

Rita—Age of puberty of a girl or the period of season of a woman when she is fit for marital consummation 215 217, 218, 221 Not synonymous with menstruation 217, 218

Ritvik — The officiating priest who performs a Vedic sacrifice for another 289

Sacahidānand—The Supreme Being having eternal existence (sat), eternal knowledge (chit), eternal Bliss (Ānand) as His essential nature 15, 59

Sadāchāra — Good conduct 250, 251, 254, 301 38

Sadhvi—A virtuous and faithful wife 226, 238

Sahadharmachārini — A dutiful wife co-operating with her husband in all the social and religious duties of life 201

S'airvas—Followers of the sect which believes in Shiva as the highest God 78

S'aivism—The faith of persons' believing in God Shiva as the highest divinity 116

S'ama—Tranquility 100

Samam—Equal minded 309, 396

Sāman — Metrical hymns and verses of the Sāma Veda which were sung in the form of music 21

Samānodaka—One who is related to another beyond seven degrees from a common male ancestor, and who offers libations of water to the latter 382, 388

Samāvartana — A religious rite indicating the completion of the order of student and fitting him for embracing the order of a house-holder 201, 263, 295

- Satra**—The component strand or constituent of physical nature (Prakṛiti) which is the principle of purity 152, 153
- Satvam**—(1) Empiric reality 61, 86, (2) Supreme reality or essential existence 59, (3) Virtue of truthfulness 105, 106
- Satyaya Satvam**—The truly real in the world of empiric reality 61, 86
- Saucha**—Purity 326
- Sautramani**—A kind of Vedic sacrifice at which spirituous liquor was drunk 322
- Savann**—Rite of pressing of Soma for libation of sacrificial juice, three times a day—Prātara (morning) Mādhyandina (midday) and Sāntma (evening) 34
- Śākhās**—Vedic schools of thought 22 179
- Ślodhāya Vidyā**—A mode of worship or prayer of Brahman 73, 74, See Vidyā
- Śukla Devāh**—Plinius worshippers 36, 117
- Shodash Kala**—See Vidyā
- Shraddhā**—The rite of worshipping the manes of the deceased ancestors of a person by offering funeral cakes and water with faith accompanied with holy Mantras.
—To the Vedas 49, 50
—In the Gita 174
—To Manu Smṛiti 196, 317, 321
- Smṛiti**—Tradition, recollections handed down traditionally and based on Śruti 9, 183, 253 (See general Index)
- Snātaka**—One who has taken his holy bath as indicating the completion of his studies and as preparatory to the order of house-holder or a Vedic Graduate 263, 296
- Sramana**—Wandering mendicants and ascetics, who beg for food 124
- Sṛgya**—Spiritual merit 107
- Śruti**—Revered scriptures containing the spiritual wisdom of God heard by sages by intuition and acquired by direct experience 8, 19 252 (See general Index)
- Suddhādvaita**—Doctrine of pure monism 16(6)
- Sudras**—
Aat—Of impure origin 16 (15), 279, 359, 366, 367
Sat—Of pure origin, 16(15) 279, 359, 366 367 368, 369
- Sukshma Shmra**—Subtle body 93, 95
- Sunya**—Indefinite abyss of void or nothingness 163
- Suru**—Wine 315
- Sutras**—Short aphorisms on various subjects including systems of philosophy 10, 23, 179, 180 183
- Srauta (Kalpa)**—(Vedic or ritualistic) 23, 180, 183
- Grhya**—(Domestic) 23, 180, 183

- Dharma—(Legal, social & moral)
16(11), 23, 180, 181, 183
- Svabhāva—Nature (Prakṛiti) 131
- Svadharmā—The duty laid down
for one's own conduct 170, 174,
177, 252
- Svādhyāya—The daily study of
the Vedas as enjoined in the
Vedas for the twice-born 291
- Svarāt—Self-dependent monarch
having self-government or perfect
freedom 371
- Svayamvara—Choice marriage of
a girl 214
- S'vetadvīpa—White island or the
Heavenly abode of God Nārā-
yaṇa 118
- Swaninī—Wanton woman 240, 241
- Swārājya—Perfect freedom or
emancipation 191
- Swarga—Heaven 1, 25
- Swayambhu—Self-existent or
Prajāpati, the creator of the
world 317
- Tajās—The individual soul in a
dreaming state 95
- Tamas—The component strand or
constituent of physical nature
which is the principle of dark-
ness 152, 153
- Tapas — Austerity 105, 106,
378, 379
- Tapta Kṛichha—(See Prāyas-
chitta)
- Trāvaruka—One who belongs to
the three higher castes 21
- Trayi Vidyā—Knowledge of the
three Vedas, viz., the R̥g Veda,
the Yajur Veda and the Sāma
Veda 21
- Trimūrti — Indian Trinity 39,
114, (See Trinity Indian, General
Index).
- Tulāpurush—A kind of penance
378
- Uchhishta — A person who has
not washed his mouth after eat-
ing 331
- Upādhyāya—A sub-teacher who
teaches a portion of the Veda
or its appendages (Anga) for
his livelihood 288
- Upakosala—See Vidyā
- Upanayana—Rite of initiation to
the sacred thread on the part
of the twice-born 263
- Upāṅgas—Sub-appendages of the
Veda.
Nyāya (Logic), Mīmāṃsā
(Science of interpretation of
Vedic rites),
Dharmashastras (codes of religi-
ous law), and Purāṇas (ancient
mythological narratives) 23
- Upanishad—(1) Secret knowledge
taught by the teacher in private
to select students who were
qualified for the same, (2) the
revealed scriptures which form
the end of the Vedas and are
called the Vedānta 55 (See
General Index)
- Upapātakas—Sins less grave than
mortal sins 385, 386

Upāsana—Meditation or worship of God 71

Pratīka Upāsana—Meditation of symbol or symbol worship 71, 72

Saguna Upāsana—Meditation of God with attributes 72

Aha graha Upāsana—Inward meditation of God with knowledge of the spiritual identity of the devotee and the divinity 73

Upāsana Kuṇḍa—Theological section of the Vedas and Upanishads dealing with meditations of God 14

Upa Vedas—Supplements to Vedas *Āyurveda* (science of medicine) 23, *Dharmurveda* (science of morality) 23, *Gandharvaveda* (science of music) 23 and *Arthaveda* (science of arts e.g. sculpture, carving etc.) 24

Vṛgdāna—Verbal promise to give a girl in marriage 201

Vaikuṇṭha—Heavenly abode of God Vishnu 102, 118

Vairāḍeya—Wergild or punishment by fine, inflicted in primitive times for offences 375

Vairāgya—Renunciation or conquest of desire 172

Vaiṣṇava—One believing in God Vishnu or any of his incarnations as the supreme deity 60, 78, 116 118 119, 319

Vaiṣṇavism—The faith of persons believing in Vishnu or any of

his incarnations as the highest divinity 120

Vaisr̥ṇara—(See *Vidyā*)

Vānprastha—Aśramite (See orders of Life, general Index)

Varna—Colour or caste 16(10), 16(12)

Savarna—A person belonging to one of the four Ārya castes 266, 351

Avarna—A person belonging to a class having no caste, i.e. an Un-Āryan 266, 351

Varasankhara—(1) Mixture of blood by intermarriage of persons belonging to different castes 174

(2) hybrid offspring of mixed marriages, *Anuloma* and *Pratiloma* 16(16), 348

Varnāśram Dharma—Eight fold religion of four castes and four orders of life 27, 106

Vāsanā—Attachments of an individual to relations of the phenomenal world and the impressions imbibed therefrom which lead to rebirth 95, 158

Vāsudeva—Supreme God 118, 120

Veda—The four, *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda* 21 (See general Index)

Vedāṅga—Appendages of the Vedas 389

Śikṣā—The science of phonetics or pronunciation and committing to memory the Vedas 22

Kalpa—The science treating of Vedic rites and rituals 22

- Vyākaraṇa—Science of grammar 23
- Nirukta—Science dealing with the etymology of Vedas 23
- Chhandas—Science dealing with the meter of Vedic hymns 23
- Jyotiṣh—Science of astronomy 23
- Vibhūti—The glorious forms of Vāsudeva-Krishna manifested in the world 137, 138
- Vidhi—A positive commandment or injunction enjoining a certain specified act 12, 25, 261, 389
- Vidvat - Parishad — Synod of Pandits and learned men. See Parishad
- Vidyā—Cognitions or modes of worship of God 72, Paryanka 72; Panchāgni 72, Upakosala 72; Dahara 67, 72; S'andilya 72, 73, 74; Vais'vānara 72; Madhu 72; Shodas'a Kalā 72
- Vikalpa—An alternative mode of interpretation of a text 239, 253, 262, 322
- Virāt Puruṣh—The evolved person created by God (Puruṣha) by whose sacrifice the creation was made 26, 46
- Viruddha Dharmās'raya — The doctrine according to which Brahman is the substrate of opposite attributes as constituting its nature 60
- Viśiṣṭādvaita—Doctrine of distinguished monism 16 (6)
- Viś'va—The individual soul in a waking state 95
- Vivāha—Marriage rite of 208–213
Forms of—Brahma 205, Daiva 205, Ārsha 205; Prājāpatya 205, Āsura 205, Gāndharva 205; Rākshasa 205; Pais'ācha 205 (See Marriage general index)
- Vivāha Homa — Nuptial sacrifice 209
- Vivarta Vāda—The theory of creation as an illusion or an unreality 88. See Māyā Vāda.
- Vrātya—One who is degraded from his caste by neglect of his religious duties 272, 276, 288, 347
- Vrātyastoma—A special rite of purifying the Āryans who had been degraded to a fallen life, including reconversion of those who had been converted to other faiths 16 (18), 288, 364, 378
- Vyavahāra Kānda — Section of the Dharmashāstras dealing with rules of conduct governing social and legal relations of a man 184
- Vyuha—The forms assumed by God Vāsudeva in which he was worshipped in the Pāṇcharātra school 120
Vāsudeva 120
Sankarshana 120
Pradyumna 120
Aniruddha 120
- Yajna—Sacrifice 106, 378, 379
- Vedic:
Vihita—Obligatory 28
Agni hotra—Daily fire sacrifice 180

Yajna—

Vedic—(continued)—

Darsapautnamūsa—New and full moon sacrifices 297

Kāmya Yajna—Sacrifice with desire of rewards 28

Rājasuya Yajna—Sacrifice performed by a king for universal sovereignty 28

Asvamedha Yajna — Horse sacrifice performed by a king for progeny etc., and universal sovereignty 28, 29

Domestic

Vivāha Homa—Nuptial sacrifice at the time of marriage 209

Pancha Mahā Yajna—The five great sacrifices done by a house-holder as a part of his daily obligatory duties 195-197

Pāka Yajna—Domestic sacrifices of vegetables in place of animals 321

Ishi Prājñapatya—Sacrifice to Prajāpati done by a Brāhman while embracing the holy order of ascetics 307

Miscellaneous

Rudra Yāg — Sacrifice to Rudra which a Nishāda chief was entitled to perform 369

Yajurveda—Black and white 21

Yajus—Formulas and utterances in the Yajurveda used for Sacrificial purposes 21

Yama

(1) King of the blessed world of fathers in heaven enjoying celestial pleasures 48, 49

(2) God of death 309

(3) Rules of self restraint and conduct 301

Yoga.

(1) Control or balance of mind 168, 169

(2) Skill in work 168

(3) Action without desire (Karma Yoga) 165, 166, 168, 169, 170

(4) Union with God by contemplation 168

(5) System of Philosophy 10, 11 122

(6) Ascetic practices 308-310

Yogangas

Subservients of Yoga practices

Yama 301 Niyama 301

Āsana 308, Prāṇāyāma 309,

Pratyāhāra 310 Dharana 310,

Dhyāna 310, Samādhi (supreme contemplation)

Yoga Māyā—Power of delusion of God 156

Yuga ages

Satya 16 (22) 259

Tretā 16 (22) 259

Dwāpara 16 (22) 259 260

Kalī 16 (22) 259, 260

GENERAL INDEX

The names and subjects in the Sanskrit index have not been included here except in a few instances and considerations of space have likewise required the omission of names of secondary importance. The names of authors are given in a separate index. The numerals at the end refer to pages of the book.

- Aborigines, 16 (16)–16 (19), 35, 266, 270
- Absolute, See Brahman
- Absolute idealism or non-dual monism, 14, 15, 16, 47, 64, 65, 132, 154, 155, 191
- Actions (Karmas)
- and knowledge theory of union of 134, 135
 - and knowledge relation of, 166
 - Inaction, denouncement of, 167
 - with desire, 167, 168
 - without desire (Karma Yoga), 166, 168
 - Practice of Self control (Yoga) and work with detachment, 168–171
 - In the Vedas, 25, 28
 - In the Upanishads 105–106
 - In the Gītā, 168, 172
 - In the Dharmashāstras, 249, 255
- Adoption by husband, 232; by wife, 233, (2) widow, 233–235
- Agastya, 112, 319
- Ahur Mazd, 35
- Akshamānā (Arundhati), 228
- Anchorite, order of
- Rules of conduct and duties of, 304–306
- Angas or Vedāngas—Appendages of Veda, 22
- Shikshā (Art of studying by committing to memory the Vedas), 22
- Kalpa (rules relating to Vedic rituals and sacrifices), 23
- Vyakarana (Vedic grammar), 23
- Nirukta (Vedic etymology), 23
- Chhandas (rules relating to Vedic meter), 23
- Jyotis (Science of astronomy), 23
- Anthropomorphism, 15, 69
- Antyajās (See Backward Classes)
- Apāntaratamas, 122
- Āranyakas—Forest books for anchorites, 54
- Arjuna, 114, 115, 126, 128
- Arthavāda—Explanatory or eulogistic statement which has no obligatory force, 12, 25, 262
- Āryans and Un-Āryans, 36, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271
- Ārya Samājists, 217, 223, 224, 274, 279, 280, 281, 320, 347, 365
- Ascetic, order of
- Rules of conduct and duties of, 306–311
 - Whether a Śūdra can be an ascetic, 307

- Impostor ascetics, 308
 and extreme asceticism in Jainism
 Buddhism and some faiths of
 Christianity, 312, 313
 Assembly of learned men (Vidvat
 Parishad)
 to decide doubtful points of law,
 258
 to confess sins before, 380
 to dictate penances and purifica-
 tory rites, 388, 389
 Asuras, 35
 Ātman—Derivation of, 62 63
 (See Self)
 Atmospheric world, 161
 Atom, 16 (5) 96
 Atomic theory, 16 (5)
 Authority sources of,
 Vedas or S'rutis, 8 189, 252
 Smṛiti (tradition), 9, 189, 253
 Good conduct and custom, 189,
 254
 Reason, 8, 254
 Purāṇa, 9, 23, 252, 253
 Backward classes (Antyajas) 16
 (16), 16 (17), 340 347, 359,
 360, 361 366, 367
 Seven classes of, 359
 not untouchables, 16 (17) 358
 not unworthy of touch like
 Chāṇḍālas, 359-361
 relation with Chāṇḍālas, 366
 several of them not in need of
 special protection, 362
 uplift of, 362-364
 exploitation of by the reformers,
 368
 Purification movement (Shuddhī)
 for readmission to caste of,
 364-365
 elevation of status of by leading
 a pure and moral life, 368
 religious learning imparted to
 them through Purāṇas, 370
 Path of devotion in the Gītā
 thrown open to them, 370
 integral parts of the Hindu
 community, 370
 no apathy towards them, 370
 Baroda, 359
 Bentitude—See emancipation
 Bhagavad Gītā (the holy song
 sung by Lord Shri Krishna)
 Historic, 126
 Tributes to, 126
 Commentaries on, 126
 Date of, 127
 Opinions about the teaching
 of, 127
 Main purpose of, 128
 Non-sectarian religion of, 141
 Catholic spirit of, 141
 Religion of devotion in, 140-142
 Bhagwat Purāṇa, 138, 314
 Bhāgwat school of theology, 120
 Bhakti (devotion), 137, 140, 142,
 143, 148 166 See devotion
 Bhāṅgi, 16 (17) 356 358
 Bhāradwāja hermitage of, 112
 Bhārata, 111
 Bheel, 347
 Brigu, 51
 Birds two
 Supreme and Individual Souls
 contrasted as, 76

Body physical:

Gross, 92, Subtle, 93; Causal, 93; Elements of, 93

Bolshevism, 16 (22), 397

Brahman — The Absolute or Supreme Being

Derivation of the word, 59

Nature of, 59-62, 64, 129, 130

Sole reality, 61, 67, 68, 90, 129

Double aspect of, transcendent and Immanent, 131, 132

Identity in essence of the Supreme and the Individual Souls, 65-68

The Supreme Being and Nature, relation of, 87

Triune Unity of the Supreme Being, 95, 96

Brāhmana (Caste).

Pre-Vedic origin of, 27, 268

Divine origin of from the head of Virāt, 26, 106, 264

Created on the principle of nature and works, 173

Duties and professions of, 174, 175, 193, 282, 283

As the type of virtue and self-sacrifice, 200

Brāhmanas, 22, 25

Breaths vital, five, 93

Brotherhood, Universal, 16, 197

Buddhism, 16 (10), 111, 123, 312, 320, 350

Caste

Four castes, 26, 173, 193

Pre-Vedic Origin of: 27, 268, 269

Caste-(continued)—

As a divine institution origin of, from the body of Virāt, 26, 106, 173, 264, 265

Glowing tributes to the institution of, 187, 188

A social institution based on the principle of division of labour, 287

Origin and growth of: 26, 106, 173, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268-271

Distinctions of, on basis of colour, (Varna), 267, 272-273

Determination of, by birth and not profession, 273-274

Based on the biological law of heredity, 287

Origin of from mixed marriages 198, 272, 273, 275-277

Professional 16 (16), 277, 278, 347, 355, 356, 359

Change of, whether in this life or next one, 278-280

Duties religious and professional of,

Brāhmana, 174, 193, 282

Kshatriya, 174, 175, 194, 282, 283

Vais'ya, 175, 194, 283, 284

S'udra, 175, 194, 283, 284

Autonomy of, 284

Backward, 16 (16), 359

Degraded and untouchable, 16 (16), 16 (17), 339, 340

Right to excommunicate from, 284, 387, 88

Right to re-admit to, 364, 385, 388

- In the Vedas, 2
 In the Upanishads, 106
 In the Gītā, 173
 In the Manu Smṛiti, 193
 In the Dharmashāstras, 262-287
 Caste Hindus and the casteless, 266-267
 Causation law of, 80, 81, 157
 and transmigration, 162
 and retribution, 157
 Chaitanya, 16 (2)
 Chamār, 16 (17)
 Chāṇḍāla's classes of, 16 (13), 16 (16), 16 (17), 16 (21), 36 198 275, 330, 340-344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 363, 366, 367
 Chārṇāka, 123
 Child Marriage Restraint Act, 219, 296
 Christian theology and Indian Philosophy 4
 Christianity and the Religion of the Gītā, 141
 Cogito ergo sum (I think I exist) 97
 Communism, theory of, 16 (22), 297, et seq
 fallacies underlying 397
 Some phases of, 397, 398
 Opposed to democracy, 398 399
 Restraining influence of Dharmashastras in combating, 399, 401
 Conduct—See good conduct.
 Contemplation of the Supreme Being—Is it an empty abstraction? 103, 104
 Cosmology or creation.
 theories of, 43-47, 79-81
 triple, 81, 82
 Quintuple, 81, 82
 sāṅkhya mode of, 45, 123
 criticism of the theories of, 88
 a process of evolution from an exoteric point of view, 90
 esoteric doctrine of, 90
 by the Lord of dual nature, 149, 150
 Order of evolution, 151
 Creative medium (Prakṛti) 156
 and the law of causation, 157
 In Vedas, 43-47
 In the Upanishads, 78
 In the Gītā, 149-158
 In Manu Smṛiti 190
 Cow
 Utility of 319
 Sacred Character of, 320
 Worship of, 321
 Intondiction of beef-eating, 321
 Injunction for non-slaughter of, 330
 Creation—See Cosmology
 Customs ancient, 254-256
 as source of religion and authority, 189
 as transcendental law, 254
 legal enforcement of, 257
 not to be immoral, 257
 Non-interference by Āryans with, customs of the conquered races 256
 of districts, classes, guilds and families, 256

- injunction for preservation of,
 255, 256, 257
 Wholesale substitution of new
 for old, unjustifiable, 257
 Paramount duty of the sove-
 reign to preserve existing,
 social or religious, 257
 Evidence of, 257
 Hindu law mostly consisting
 of, 255
 Daisana - perception or direct
 vision; system of philosophy, 1
 Dāsa, 35, 36, 266, 267, 269, 270,
 271, 345, 362, 363
 Dāśaratha, 246
 Dasyus, 35, 36, 266, 267, 270,
 277, 345, 346, 362
 Debts three owed by every man,
 discharge of, 201, 307
 Defilement—See Impurity
 Deism and theism, 77
 Destruction of the Universe, 82, 83
 Devotion (Bhakti) doctrine of, 140
 Universal and non-sectarian,
 nature of, 140, 141
 Moral effect of, 141
 with love, 142
 with knowledge, 144
 Emancipation as fruit of, 144
 Effects of viz. to the
 world and the humanist
 life, 142
 Dharmaśāstra (Smṛiti), 9, 16
 65, 172, 173, 177, 253
 254, 255, 256, 257, 258
 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000
 Theistic basis of, 16(21), 393
 classification of, 181, 184
 commentaries on, 186
 Digests of law on, 186
 Special purpose of, 389-401
 catholicity of, 16(22) - 16(24)
 260
 ethics of, 181-182
 Dharma Vyādha 16(18), 369
 Dhed, 16(17), 356, 358
 Dictator, 399
 Dighatamas, 41
 Divine Grace Doctrine of,
 In the Upanishads, 76
 „ „ Gītā, 148, 149
 Divorce, opposed to the sacra-
 mental theory of marriage, 199,
 234-245
 Doms, 16(17), 356, 358
 Draupadi, 247
 Dualism and monism, 124
 Duties
 Sacrificial, 25, 28, 172, 195
 Social as relating to castes
 (Varna) 26, 106, 173, 193,
 262-287
 relating to the four orders of
 life (Āśrama) 26, 106, 287-
 314
 Moral, 28, 105, 175, 192,
 198, 254
 relating to worship and devo-
 tion, 29-38, 68-79, 113, 114,
 110-115, 189, 195
 Marital, 200, 201, 212, 213-248
 Customary and traditional,
 250-258

- Legal 254, 258, 259, 260,
314-326, 326-339 392, 393,
399-401
- Obligatory daily duties of the
twice-born, 195-197
- Duties varying for different
ages, 259
- Electrons theory of, 16 (5), 96
- Elements:
- of the physical body, 93, 96
 - of matter, 81, 82, 96, 143,
150, 152
- Emancipation, 1
- Positive conception of, 162
- Kinds of
- (1) Oneness with the Supreme
Being, 101-104, 163
 - (2) Companionship with the
Supreme Being, 104, 105, 164
 - (3) Release by stages, 105
 - (4) as an eternal abode, 163, 164
- means to 165
- In the Vedas, 48
- In the Upanishads, 101-105
- In the Gītā, 162-166
- In Manu Smṛiti, 191
- In Yājñavalkya 193
- Epics.
- Historic, 111
 - Ethics of, 112, 124, 125
 - Theology of, 113, 114-119
 - Philosophical systems in, 120-
124
- Equality of all criticism of the
theory of, 394-397
- Eschatology
- Reward of heaven for virtue, 48
 - Punishment of hell, for vice,
50, 161
 - atmospheric and nether worlds,
161
 - world of Brahman, 99, 104,
160, 161
 - world of Gods, 48, 49, 160, 161
 - world of fathers, 48, 49, 50,
161
 - world of ghosts, 161
 - transmigration, 3-5, 98, 99,
100 161, 191
 - Doctrine of five fires (Panch
āgni), 99
 - Paths of the fathers and Gods,
99, 160
 - In the Vedas, 48-51
 - In the Upanishads, 96-101
 - In the Gītā, 160-162
- Ethics, 16 (19)
- Eastern and Western, 16 (8)
 - Place of in Indian Philosophy,
107, 108
 - Place of in Gītā, 178
 - Moral Virtues, 28, 105, 106,
175-177
 - Rules of castes and stages of
life (Varnāśrama) 26, 28,
106 107, 178
 - Doctrine of action without
desire (Karma Yoga) 168
 - Practice of self-control, 168
 - Sacrificial Acts 25, 28, 172
 - Cause of sin, 171
 - In the Vedas 28
 - In the Upanishads, 105, 108
 - In the Epics, 112, 124

- In the Gitā, 166-178
 In Manu Smṛiti, 192
 In the Dharma Sūtras, 181
 In Dharma Shāstras, 254
 Eugenics, 219
 Evil Doctrine of, 5-7
 Evolution:
 Creation a process of, from an
 exoteric point of view, 90
 Sāṅkhya mode of, 45, 123
 Origination of the three strands
 of nature, 123, 143
 Order of in creation, 151, 152
 Exogamy rule of, 203
 Faculties:
 Five, of perception and know-
 ledge, 93
 Five, of action, 93
 Fathers (Pitris) deceased, invoca-
 tion and worship of, (Shrāddhas)
 49, 196, 317
 Gautama Buddha, 16(20), 111,
 123, 124, 314
 God—worship of:
 Polytheistic, 29, 30
 without attributes, 59, 60, 74
 with attributes, 72, 73, 74
 as impersonal self (Ātman) 74
 theistic mode of with devotion,
 75, 135, 136
 two modes of manifest and
 unmanifest, 144
 realisation of God by three
 modes - knowledge, devotion
 and action, 13, 14, 165, 166
 Good conduct, 16(19), 28, 254, 255
 Gopāla Krishna, 10, 121
 Government of India Act, 351, 352
 Guest, hospitality to, 16(14), 197,
 198, 297
 Guha, 369
 Heaven, Pleasures of, 48, 49
 Hell as infernal region, 50, 51,
 161
 Henotheism, 41
 Heredity law of, as governi g
 castes, 287
 Hermit—See Anchorite.
 Hindu widow remarriage Act, 231
 Hospitality to the guest, 16 (14),
 197, 198, 297
 Householder—order of:
 Rules of conduct and duties
 of, 296-304
 Term of householdership, 304
 Husband and wife, rights and
 duties of, 224-228
 Idealism or Spiritualism and
 materialism, 16 (5)—See Abso-
 lute Idealism
 Idols of God, worship of—See
 Images.
 Illusoriness or unreality of the
 world, theory of—See Māyāvāda
 Images of God, worship of, 71,
 72, 74
 Immortality of the soul, doctrine
 of, 4, 96, 97, 102, 129
 and total annihilation, 4
 and eternal retribution, 4
 and emancipation, 4
 Impurity
 by touch of impure persons,
 330-331

- by touch of certain animals, 330
 by touch of a corpse, 331
 by suicide, 332
 by touch of a woman in menses
 or in confinement, 333
 purification from, special rules
 for, 334-338
 pure and impure things, 334-337
- Incarnations of God**
 Ten and twenty-four as mentioned in the Purāṇas, 118
 Of the Supreme God as Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva, 137
- Inference or reason as a source of knowledge**, 8, 254
- Inner Voice**, 171
- Interpretation**
 Mīmāṃsā rules of, 12, 23, 187, 253
 Of Vedas modes of, 51-53
- Intuition, as a source of knowledge** 2, 9, 19, 103, 134, 165
- Islām and the religion of the Gītā**, 141
- Izava**, 355
- Jainas and Jainism**, 4, 16 (10) 98, 111, 123, 312, 320, 350
- Jambuvati**, 115
- Janaka Janadeva**, 123
- Jātakas**, 354
- Jñāneshwara**, 16 (2)
- Judaism and the religion of the Gītā** 141
- Kaivarta**, 359
- Kakshivat or Kakshivan**, 16 (18), 271, 369
- Karma or retribution law of**, 3
 Genesis of, 51, 99
 and transmigration, 3-5, 100, 101, 191
 and causation, 157
 In the Vedas, 5
 In the Upanishads, 100, 101
 In the Gītā, 161, 162
 In Manu Smṛiti, 191
- Kautsa**, 52
- Kavasha Ailusha**, 16(18), 271, 369
- Kāyastha**, 359, 361
- Kirata** 347
- Knowledge spiritual**
 Doctrine of, 64, 68, 131-4, 165
 means and sources of, 7, 10
 their relative value and authority, 8
 and action theory of union of, 134, 135
 and action relation of, 166
- Kṛṣṇa**
 and Arjuna, 126
 as a great teacher of the doctrine of devotion, 126
 performing Sandhyā and fire worship, 113
 propitiating God Shiva for having a son, 115
 cult of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, 114, 118
 cult of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, 120, 121
 cult of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, 121
 an Incarnation of Vishnu, 117, 126
 an Incarnation of Vāsudeva-the Supreme deity, 137

- Kṛishna-Vāsudeva—devotion to, 136, 147, 148-9
 as a divine incarnation, 137
 the embodied form of, a part manifestation of the glories of Brahman, 138
 the embodied form of, illusoriness of, 139
 organic unity of the cosmos in, 139
 Spiritual form of a concrete manifestation of Brahman, 140
 as a God of worship, 147, 148
- Washatriya:
 Pre-Vedic origin of, 27, 268
 Divine origin of from the hands of Virāt, 26, 106, 264
 Created on principle of nature and works, 173
 Duties and professions of, 174, 175, 194, 282, 283
- Laxman, 112
- League of nations, 16 (24)
- Legislative Assembly present day whether competent to make religious laws, 259
- Liberation—See Emancipation
- Light and shadow:
 the Supreme and individual souls contrasted as, 76
- Love, universality of, 16, 197
- Magi, 21
- Magical practices, spells and incantations, 21, 36
- Mahār, 356, 358
- Mahāsabhites, 320, 365
- Māhāvira, 16(10), 111, 123, 124
- Mahomedan theology and Indian Philosophy, 4
- Maintenance
 of wife, 230, 231
 of widow, 231, 232
 effect of unchastity on right to, 230, 231, 232
- Malyālis, 247, 274
- Manu Smṛiti
 historic, 16(11), 184
 date of, 16(11), 184, 185
 tributes to, 16(11), 184, 187, 188
 summary of, 188
 doctrines of, 189-200
- Marriage.
 A religious sacrament 199, 200
 A religious obligation, 200
 for perfection of man, 199, 200
 for one's purification, 201
 to beget a son to discharge the three debts owed by every man, 201
 indissolubility of the tie of, 199
 Hindu ideal of, 212
 Unity of interest of husband and wife by, 199, 212, 213
 Prohibition of, outside one's caste, 198, 204, 275-277
 forms of, 205
 Rites and ceremonies of, 208-213
 Restrictions of, based on principles of sociology and eugenics, 203
 Qualifications of Bridegroom for, distinguished by good qualities, agreeable, and handsome, 202, 219

Qualifications of Bridegroom (continued)

Of same social standing and same caste 202

Examination of virility of enjoined 202

Whether a eunuch is competent to marry ? 203

Whether a mad man can marry ? 203

Qualifications of a girl for

Not related within prohibited Degrees (Āśapindā) 203

Outside family (Āśāgotrī) 203

Of the same caste (Savarnī) 204

A virgin (Kanyā) 20

free from bodily defects, 203

beautiful and younger than husband 204

Selection and choice of husband by the girl's father with her consent according to the Vedic ideal, 213, 214, 215

Age of parties for, 214-219, 296

Divorce opposed to Brahma, form of, 199, 244, 245

Monogamy as Vedic ideal, 245

Polygamy inconsistent with the Vedic ideal of, 245, 246

Polyandry uncommon among the Āryans, 246 247

Child marriage restraint Act 219, 296

Second marriage of widows 237-243

Marriage (continued)

Niyoga practice of, 235-237

Sale of girls denouncement of, 248

Husband and wife rights and duties of 224-228

Mātangn, episode of, 367

Materialism and Spiritualism, 16 (4) (5) (6)

Matter analysis of, 96

Māyā—(1) Nature (Prakṛiti) or not-self, 131, 143

(2) Illusion 68 81 85, 129, 139 144, 155

(3) Delusive power of God, 155 156

(4) ignorance, 156

Mūya Vada—Illusion or Unreality of the world doctrine of, 43, 62, 82-88, 155 156

Mīmāṃsā or Purva Mīmāṃsā

System of Philosophy, 10, 12 16 (3), 23 260

Rules of interpretation, 12, 187, 253

Mind 93

Miribān 16 (2)

Mitākṣhara, 186 204 218, 220, 238, 240, 323

Mixed marriages 198, 204, 275-277

Mlecchhas (Barbarians) 277 342

Monism non-dual doctrine of 14, 15 16, 47 64, 65 87, 124, 132, 154 155, 191

In the Vedas 47

In the Upanishads, 64, 65

- In the Mahābhārata, 124
 In the Gītā, 132, 154, 155
 In Manu Smṛiti, 191
- Monogamy:**
 as Vedic ideal, 245
 strictly observed by the Vād-
 nagrā Nāgar caste as an
 an ideal, 246
- Monotheism:**
 and Monism, 14-16
 and deism, 77
 History of, 68, 69, 77, 78,
 135, 136
 In the Vedas, 41
 In the Upanishads, 75
 In the Mahābhārata, 114
 In the Gītā, 135, 136
 In the Dharma Shāstras, 393
 See devotion
- Morality:** 16 (9), 105, 112, 124,
 125, 175, 181, 192, 251, 254
 Eastern and Western systems
 of, 16 (8), 16 (9)
 and religion, 16 (19)
 theistic basis of, 16 (21)
 moral qualities, 28, 105, 176-
 177, 182
 moral life preferred to that
 by birth, 198
 rules of, paramount to those
 of purity of conduct, 301
 lists of virtues
 in the Vedas, 28
 in the Upanishads, 105
 in the Gītā, 176, 177
 in the Dharma Sūtras, 181, 182
 in the Dharma Shāstras,
 192, 193, 301
- Nars, 274
 Nambudri, 355
 Nārada Samhitā, 121
 Narsimha Mehta, 16(2)
 Nature (Prakṛiti)
 lower (Aparā) or not-self, 143,
 146, 150, 172
 higher (Parā) or self, 143, 145,
 150
 strands or constituents (Gunas)
 of viz. satva or principle of
 purity, rajas or principle of
 energy and tamas or principle
 of darkness, 143, 151, 152
- Nāyadī, 355
 Nether world or Hell, 161
 Niruktas, 269
 Nishādas, 36, 116, 117, 266, 269,
 275, 345, 346, 347, 349, 354,
 363, 369
 Niyoga, 235-237
 Not-self, (Prakṛiti) See Nature
 Nyāya system of philosophy, 10,
 23, 122, 297
- Ontology:**
 Nature of the Absolute
 (Brahman) or the Supreme
 Being, 59-62
 The Absolute (Brahman) as
 sole reality, 61, 67, 68, 90, 129
 Double aspect of Brahman,
 transcendent and immanent,
 60, 61, 131-133
 Nature of Ātman or Self, 62,
 64, 129-131
 Identity of the Supreme Self
 and Individual self, 65-68

Discrimination of self and non self, 129

In the Upanishads, 58-68

In the Gītā, 129-135

Orders of life, (Āshrama) viz those of student, house-holder, anchorite and ascetic and their duties, 27, 106, 107, 287, 311, 314

Outcasts: 35, 36, 117, 198, 266, 267, 269, 270, 275, 277, 330, 340 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 358, 366, 367

non-association with, 298, 339-341

their occupations, 277, 340
special rules of purification from defilement by, 341-344
excommunication for intercourse with, 387-388

Panchamas: 36, 198, 266

Pānoharātra or Bhāgwat School of theology, 120

Panchashikha, 123

Pantheism, 39

false sense of, or lower, 87, 92, 138, 155

true sense of 155

and absolute idealism, 155

In the Vedas, 39

In the Upanishads, 80

In the Gītā, 154

Pantheon of Gods in the Vedas, 29-30

classification of Vedic Gods as celestial, atmospheric and terrestrial, 38, 39

Major Gods.

Varuna, 30 Sun, 31, Indra, 31, 32, Rudra, 32, Agni, 32, Soma, 33

Minor Gods 34

Gods of the Āryans and Asuras, 35, 36

Abstract Gods, 37

Names of God as creator

Dakṣha, 42 Twastri, 42,

Brahmanaspati, 43 Vishwa-

larman 43 Hiranyagarbha, 43

Indian Trinity, 39

Purusha, 46

Virāt, 46

Pantheon of Gods in the epics.

Indian Trinity (Trimurti), 114,

Vishnu, 114, Shiva, 114, 115,

Kubera, 113, Kārtikēya, 113,

Kāma, 113, Gangā, 113,

Laxmī, 113 Skanda, 114,

Durgā, 114

Paradise—See Heaven

Pāra, 355

Pāśinipata System, 121, 122

Paths.

Paths of Fathers (Pitriyāna)

and Gods (Devayāna), 99, 160

Paths of religion, viz., action,

devotion and knowledge, 16

(1) 165, 166

Paths for emancipation and

realisation of God, 13, 14,

165, 166

Penances.

By way of purification from sins, 377 378, 379

- Value of, 380
- Classes of difficult, 381-4
- Dictated by the synod of
learned Brāhmins, 388-389
- Perception, as source of know-
ledge, 9
- Phallus worship, 36, 116-117
- Philosophical systems
- Orthodox systems
- Sāṅkhya, 121, 123, Yoga, 121,
122, Mīmāṃsā, 10, 12, Vedānta,
10, 12, 122; Nyāya, 10, 23,
122, Vaiśeṣika, 10, 122;
Pāṇchāītra, 120, and Pāshu-
pata, 122
- Unorthodox and atheistical
systems:
- Buddhism, Jainism and Chār-
vāka, 123, 124
- Philosophy.
- History of, 10
- Object of, 1
- Subjects of, 2
- And religion, 2
- Of the Vedas, 38-47
- Of the Upanishads, 58, 68
- Of the epics, 121-124
- Of the Gītā, 129-135
- Of Manu Smṛiti, 191
- Physics Sāṅkhya, 45, 78, 123, 152
- Pluralism doctrine of and Monism,
68, 85
- Polyandry, 246, et seq.
- Polygamy.
- opposed to Vedic ideal of
marriage, 245
- practice of, 246
- Polytheism:
- in the Vedas, 39, 40
- in the Epics 113, 119
- in the Gītā, 141
- Potential energy, (Prakṛiti), 96, 151
- Prāchīnagarbha 122
- Practices of good men, 254, 255
- Prakṛiti-nature or not-self, See
nature
- Proletariat, 399
- Psychical organism, 93, 94
- Psychology
- Embodied soul, 91, 158, 159
- True self and false self, 92
- Free and bound souls, 160
- Gross, subtle and casual
bodies, 92
- Waking, dreaming and deep
sleep, 95
- In the Upanishads, 91-96
- In the Gītā, 158-160
- Pukkasas or Pulkasas, 16 (17),
275, 340, 347, 354, 358, 363
- Punishment for religious offences:
- Divine sanction of, to preserve
law and order, 371-373
- Theories of, retributive, 373
- Deterrent, 374
- and reformative, 374-375
- Primitive:
- by ordeals, 375
- by fines, 376
- Corporal punishments 377
- Purāṇas, 9, 16(2), 23 111, 252,
253, 297
- Pure and impure things, 334-
335, 337, 338

- Purification from impurity,
 Special rules of 335-337
- Purity of conduct
 Regulations about 326-328
 Injunction of bath for 328
 Sipping of water for, 328-329
 Regulations for cooks, 338
 Relaxation of rules about in
 times of distress, 339
- Pūrva Mimamsā, See Mīmāṃsā
- Rāma.
 an ideal king, an ideal husband
 and an ideal son, 112
 the great hero of the Rāmā
 yana, 113, 247
 performing Sandhyā and fire
 worship, 112 113
 later on an incarnation of
 Vishnu, 113
 cult of Rāma worship 118
 embraced by Guha a Nishada
 King, 369
- Ramānand 16(2)
- Ramnād case, 257
- Rantadeva, 314
- Rathakāra (class of charoteers),
 369
- Reality (Sat) ultimate, 61, 67,
 68, 89, 90, 129
- Reason or Inference as source of
 knowledge, 8, 254
- Relativity doctrine of 15 16(5)
- Release. See Emancipation
- Religion (Dharma)
 Definitions of, 16 (3) 16 (4),
 193 248 249 250
 Hindu religion, 16(1)
- Two-fold nature of Hindu
 religion viz., of duty (Pravṛtti)
 and renunciation (Nivṛtti)
 248-250
- Vedic and Puranic, 'for the
 initiated and the uninitiated, 24
- General and particular, 193
 and Philosophy, 2
 and Ethics, 16(19),-16(22)
 and Sacred Law, 16 (9) (10)
 248 249
- Eastern and Western stand
 points of, 16(6)
- Sanātan religion 16(1), 16(3),
 262, 284
- Religious cults
 Rudra-Shiva, 78, 115-117
 Vishnu 78, 117
 Rāma, 118
 Krishna-Vāsudeva, 119
 Gopāl-Krishna, 120, 121
 Rādhā-Krishna 121
- Remarriage of widows 237-243
- Requital, theory of double
 In the Upanishads 99 100
 In the Gītā, 160-162
 In Manu Smṛiti, 192
- Resurrection
 and transmigration, 4
 and eternal retribution, 4
 and emancipation 4
- Retribution law of—See Karma
 law of
- Sacraments religious, 262 263
- Sacrifice.
 of fire-Vedic, 25 28, 33 173,
 180

- domestic, 16(4), 195-198
 five great daily sacrifices, 16
 (14), 195-197, 297
 sacrificial acts, 172, 173
 Sākalya, 39
 Sanātana religion, 16 (1), 16 (3),
 262, 284
 —and Islam, Judaism, and
 Christianity 16 (1)
 Sāṅkhya:
 method of knowledge, 13, 14,
 133, 165
 system of philosophy, 10, 45,
 121, 123, 152
 Theistic, 123
 Classical or atheistic, 123
 Sārda Act, 219, 296
 Sati.
 Custom of, 229-230
 Sātvata Samhitā, 120
 Saunaka, 111
 Sauti, 111, 119
 Schools of law, 187
 Self (Ātman) or Soul
 Derivation of the word Ātman,
 62, 63
 Nature of, 62, 63, 64, 129-130
 Immortality of Soul, 4, 5, 96,
 97, 102, 129, 130
 Identity of the Supreme Self
 and individual self, 65-68,
 91, 101, 130, 134, 154, 155,
 160, 163
 Worship of self (Ātman) 74-75
 Embodied Self and Supreme
 Self, distinction of, 91, 92
 True Self and False Self, 73
 Five sheaths of self, theory
 of, 94
 Triune unity of the Supreme
 Self, 95-96
 Transmigration of the Soul,
 3-5, 98, 99, 100, 161, 191
 Self not a doer but a knower
 only, 130-131
 Empiric or embodied soul,
 nature of 63, 91, 158
 as doer and enjoyer, 159
 Souls free and bound, 160
 Senses:
 Five of perception and know-
 ledge, 93
 Five of action, 93
 Sex-life, 312
 S'ankara school of philosophy, 16(6)
 Sin:
 Theories of (1) due to trans-
 gression of divine law, 371(2)
 due to ignorance and natural
 tendencies, 171 (3) due to
 defiance or neglect of one's
 duties, 177
 Classification of as:
 1. Mortal or grave (Mahā-
 pātakas) 384, 385
 2. less grave (Upapātakas)
 385
 3. Minor, 386
 4. Secret, 386, 387
 Austerities as purifiers from,
 378, 380
 confession of with a vow not
 to commit in future, 379
 Penances for, 381-384
 Shandilya Vidyā a mode of
 worship and prayer of Brahman
 73, 74

Sitā—an ideal wife, 112, 247

Smṛitis—9, 183 et seq, 253

Social service, 16(14), 16(18) 197,
357, 362-366

Sociology—203, 219

Soul (Ātman)—See Self

Spirit—Supreme, 95 96

Spiritualism and Materialism, 16
(4), (5)

S'ruti, Revealed Texts, 8, 9, 19,
152

Stages of life, (Āshrama)—See
Orders of life

Strands or constituents (Gunas)
of nature, Satva (purity) rajae
(energy) and tamas (darkness)
143 150, 151, 152, 153 171

Student order of

Rules of conduct and duties
of, 287-296

Term of studentship, 295

Studentship till death 295

Rite on completion of the
term, 295

Svapacha, 16 (17) 275 342, 328

Substrate moral, of body, 98

Sudra caste

Pre-Vedic origin of, 269

Divine origin of from the
feet of Virāt, 106, 264 265

Origin from Dāsas, 36, 270

Created on principle of nature
and works, 178

Duties and professions of, 175,
194, 283 284

Sat-Sudras, 16(15) 366-368

Asat-Sudras 16(15), 366-368

and Dāsas or Dasyus, 270, 271
disqualified to perform sacrific-
es, 280

up-lift of, by moral lessons,
298, 362

elevation of status of, by good
qualities, 362, 363, 368, 369

purification of, by Vrātya-
stoma rite, 364, 365

exploitation of by the refor-
mers, 368

Supreme Being—See Brahman
Sutras or aphorisms, 10 179 180

early history of, 179, 180

three kinds of, 180

Dharma Sutras, classification
of, 181

ethics of, 181, 182

Symbol, 71

Symbol worship 71, 72, 74

Synod or legal assembly of learned
men 258, 380, 388, 389

Techurs 274

Temple Hindn 114, 115, 350, 351
not public places like museums
etc., 353

whether Untouchables entitled
to entry in 350, 351, 352, 353

Temple Entry of the Untouchables
whether Legislation justifiable
for, 16(24), 351-354

Theism — See Monotheism and
devotion

Theology

of Vedic Gods e.g Indra,
Sun, Fire, Varuna, etc., 29-38

Classification of Vedic Gods, 38

- Indian Trinity (Trimūrti), 39, 114
 In the Upanishads, 68-79
 In the Epics, 113
 In the Gītā, 135-149
 In Manu Smṛiti, 189
 Tīyārs, 247, 274
 Todās 247, 274
 Traditions, 16(9), 16(11), 248, 249
 Traditional :
 method, 16(10), 250, 251, 289
 law, 16(9), 249, 252, 253
 religion, 248, 249, 262
 Transcendental cult, 16(4)
 Transmigration of the Soul, the doctrine of :
 and the law of retribution, 3-5, 100, 101, 191
 Genesis of, in the Vedas, 51, 99
 In the Upanishads, 98, 99, 100
 In the Gītā, 161, 162
 In Manu Smṛiti, 191
 Trinity Indian :
 The Supreme Being having three aspects (Trimūrti), 39, 114
 Doctrine of, 95, 145
 Triune unity of the Supreme Being, 16, 95
 of Krishna as Purshottama, 145
 Tukāram, 16(2)
 Tulsidās, 16(2)
 Un - Āryans, See Āryans and Un - Āryans
 Untouchability, Practice of :
 Origin of the practice of, 345, 346, 347, 348, 355, 356
 Whether a modern innovation or had Vedic sanction, 344-350
 Whether warrants entry of the Untouchables into Hindu temples, 350-354
 Practice of, recorded in Buddhist literature, 354
 Practice of, recorded by Fa-Hien, 355
 excesses in practice of due to Pre-Drāvidian influence, 355-357
 Anti-Untouchability movement, 357-358
 Bogey of Untouchability as a political instrument, 361
 Untouchables :
 Genesis of :
 Un-Āryans Races of aborigines, 36, 266, 345
 Created by God as punishment for sins in past life, 16(13) 16(21), 100, 191
 Origin of according to Aupamanyava school, 345
 Origin of according to the etymological school, 345
 Classes of, in Vedas, 345, 346
 In Buddhist literature, 16(16), 354
 In Dharma Shāstras, 191, 198, 266, 275-77

- Classes of, in S India, 855-6
and backward classes 16(17)
358
Duties and occupations of,
277-278
Nou-association with, 298,
839-841
Upamanyu 116
Upanishads 54, 55
Teachings of, 12
Classification of, 56
Principal topics in, 58
Uplift of backward classes
16(18), 357, 362, 363, 364
Usage—See Custom
Us'astichākrāyana, 323
Vadnagrā Nagar caste, 246
Vaiseshika system of philosophy
10, 121, 122
Vaishampāyana, 111 119
Vaishya caste.
Pre-Vedic origin of 27, 268
Divine origin of, from the
the thighs of Virāt, 26*106,
264
Created on principle of nature
and works 173
Duties and professions of, 175,
194, 283, 284
Vedānta or Uttara Mīmāṃsā
Philosophy 10, 12, 121, 122, 281
Vedas
Revealed Texts (S'rutis), 8, 9,
19 252
Not of human but of divine
authorship 19
A common fund of national
philosophy, 19
Oldest and highest literary
work in the history of the
World, 19, 20
Teachings of, 12
Age of, 20
Field of subjects of, 20
The Four Vedas, 21
Appendages of, Angas, 22
Upangas 23, Upavedas, 23-24
Interpretation of, 51-53
Vices.
Punishment in Hell and by
way of rebirths for, 28, 99,
100, 161, 162, 191, 192
List of in the Gītā, 177
List of in the Dharmashāstras,
182
Vidur 16(18) 869
Virmirodaya, 260
Virtues.
in the Vedas 48
in the Upanishads 105, 106
in the Gītā, 176 177
in the Dharmasutras, 182
in the Dharmashastras, 192
193, 300 301
Vishnu Purāṇa 236
Vishwāmitra.
hermitage of 112
eating dogs flesh of a chāṇḍāla
to save life, 325
Vrātyas, 117, 276 288, 347
Vyāsa, 111, 236
Widows:
rights and duties of, 224, 225,
228, 229

- Sati custom of, 229, 230
 second marriage of, 237-243
 Niyoga of, 235-237
 right to maintenance of, 231
 adoption by, 233-235
- Wisdom spiritual, See knowledge
- Woman:
 high status of, 199, 200
 freedom of, in conformity with
 law, 200
 Protection of, 224, 225
 duties of, 224, 225, 226
 duties in distressed times, 227
 duties of widows, 228, 229
 maintenance of, 230, 232
 adoption by, 233-35
- Worship of God :
 Polytheistic, 29, 30, 39
 Symbolic, 71, 72
 with attributes, 72, 73
 as impersonal self, 74
 Theistic, 75, 135, 136
 two modes of, as manifest and
 unmanifest, 144
- Yādav v/s Nāmdeva, 234
- Yājñavalkya—the great philosopher, 39, 74, 75, 319
- Yoga
 Etymology, 168
 Definitions of, 168
 Method of work (Karma Yoga)
 165, 166, 168, 169, 170
 System of philosophy, 10, 121,
 122
- Yudhisthira, 113, 125, 247
- Zoroastrian theology and Indian
 Philosophy, 4
-

